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GILBERT MARLOWE,

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

WILLIAM WHITMORE,

WITH PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR OF
“TOM BROWN’S SCHOOL DAYS.”

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P R E F A C E.

THE author of this little volume of poems is a young man, a house painter by trade, who has earned his bread by daily labour since he was ten years old. He has since that age had no education (in the common sense of the word) except what he could get at a Sunday School. The poems will speak for themselves as to how he has used such opportunities for study as fall within the reach of men in his position. He has already earned an honourable name for himself in his own neighbourhood. His friends think that this name has been honestly earned; that the author ought to have a larger audience; that he is one of those to whose speech it will be well for his countrymen of all classes to listen; and so, at last, after the usual difficulties which have to be overcome in all such cases, his book is published.

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No one is likely to be surprised now-a-days at finding that a painter can write English fluently, gracefully, and forcibly, and that he has been exercised by the same problems which are puzzling the wisest of our learned doctorts. The novelty of the thing is past. Not to speak of the giants of their order, such as Hugh Miller and Livingstone, we have had books in verse and prose by tailors, postmen, weavers, and a score of other mechanics and artizans, all showing great command of language, some of which would have placed their authors in a high rank as writers had they lived a few years earlier in the century. But there is no longer any excitement on the subject, and people will not buy and read the work of a mechanic simply because he is a mechanic. He has to come down into the lists, and win his spurs side by side with those who have had every advantage of training and social position. If he cannot hold his own he will be shouldered back at once ; for the audience are used to his garb and weapons, and will no longer shout for him to stay on simply as a strange sight.

This social equality is a healthy sign of our day, and a most honourable fact for those who have won it for their class. I should be the last man to say anything against it. I may think that the public has been a little over hasty, that there ought in fairness to be still *some* handicapping. But I am too glad to welcome any sign that the great mass of my countrymen are beginning to triumph over all hindrances, and are rising in intelligence and all noble and gentle culture, to have much sympathy to spare for a few of them, who may not have had quite fair play from Mrs. Grundy. Nevertheless, I believe, that, for the sake of getting to understand our own times, and our own land—that we may be able, each in his own small way, to help England, instead of hindering her—it may be sometimes well worth our while to buy, and read carefully, and think about, a book by a working man, while we might only hire from Mudie's, and glance at, a more perfect book on the same subject by a Master of Arts.

And this brings me to my reasons for writing a preface to these poems. I want people to read them. I may be

mistaken as to their merits as poems. I don't pretend to be a judge of the artistic worth of such matters. But I do know something of the published works of men of the author's rank—I know what the tone and spirit of the most popular and ablest of such works have been. The great—the almost irresistible temptation of such men, when they begin to write, is to appeal to class differences and class hatreds ; to work up and over-colour the sufferings and the virtues of the poor ; to preach a sort of vague worship of glorious humanity, to which phrase they will let you attach any meaning you please, so long as you allow it to remain an abstraction ; to rail at old creeds, and sneer at the believers in them. All this has been mixed with very much that was noble, and no one can wonder who knows anything of the case, that such temptations have been too strong for many. I believe, myself, that a sounder and better time is near for our country. At any rate, the present volume will prove that though such temptations may have been felt strongly, yet, that a man of Whitmore's class, may, by patient and

honest dealing with himself, and all that he sees around him, master them, and learn, that in order to love and serve his own class it is not necessary to hate or rave against all others ; that what every true poet and true man ought to be seeking for, is, a common ground for himself and every other human soul ; upon which the poor and rich, the weak and strong, may rest side by side. If he cannot shew us glimpses of such a ground, the most musical words that man ever uttered will reach no depth and meet no yearning in our hearts, however they may please our ears ; if he can, the rudest utterance will not hinder us from drinking in his words, for in them will be drops from the fountain of life.

The price of this volume will keep it, for the present at least, out of the hands of poor men. We, who have money to spare for luxuries, who have had all the education which money could buy for us, who know not what it is to depend for food, and house, and clothes, on the labour of the day, shall form the first audience of the working painter. That we may profit by what he has to say let us

try to realize his life as well as we can while we read. Few of us can do it as we ought. The grim reality of such a life cannot be really known to us. But, making such effort as we can, let us read: and, as we read, I think we shall thank God for training amongst our poorer brethren men who can think, and feel, and write, as this man has done. Shall we be wrong in taking it as a sign that He has noble work yet in store for us Englishmen, when such voices as William Whitmore's are rising more and more frequently and earnestly out of the most sorely tried portion of our great family, to teach their brethren what the work is which they are sent into the world to do, in such words as these,

Oh be it thine
To gladden and exalt their sad poor life !
Be their true brother, on thy forehead bearing
The morning of their hope. Oh do thou seek
To win this world for them ; but seek still more
To win back Heaven, now faded from their sight.
Nourish thy soul in reverence and truth.
Be thou God's workman, zealous to build up
In poor men's hearts a temple unto Him.

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DEDICATION.

To Mrs. J. F. Hollings.

PROUDLY I turn away when scornful Pride,
In some auspicious season, condescends
To make me feel how graciously it bends
Over the gulph between us. But, o'erjoyed,
My heart beats to the hearts that climb up through
The cold conventional bars ; and homage true
I yield thee, Lady ! For thou art as one
Whose presence is a constant benison ;
Whose liberal grace like sunshine freely falls
On common days as well as festivals,
And cheers dim paths of strugglers little known.—
A blessing on thee, and on him, thine Own !
Ye twain made one by generous sympathies.—
I count it much that thou regardest these
My lowly lays, and would that their desert
Were worthier thy favour. But apart
From meaner gratitude, I bend to thee
As to a nature beautiful and good,
Unfolded in the gentle dignity
And queenly charm of cultured womanhood.



P O E M S .

THE TEN DAYS' QUEEN.

ON past the village, with its humble spire—
Its quiet cots along the valley winding ;
And thence among old woods, and rocks antique,
And mellow fern-glooms, kindling with the glow
Of gorse-flowers golden, to a ruin grey
O'ergreened with trailing ivy, and o'erhung
With brooding shadows of the times of yore.

'Tis Bradgate's noble seat—a desert-pile
Slow mouldering in sun and wind and rain ;
But sacred in its ruin ; since of old
'Twas graced by one who was a peerless Queen,
And more than royal Woman—ever blest,
Our Lady, sweet Jane Grey. Her gentle name
Is the sole glory of a lordly race ;
But her dear fame is hallowed in all hearts
That bow before Misfortune's majesty,
And worship Goodness, Womanhood divine.

She was a marvel of all perfectness—
Fair as a flower, and gracious as a star
That shines on earth, untouched by earthly taint.
The faith and fervour of a holy saint,
The treasured wisdom of a grey-beard sage,
A hero's soul, and all a woman's heart,
Blended with beauty of her maiden youth.
And here she dwelt, unspotted from the world,
In lofty converse with the wise of old,
In pious meditation morn and eve,
In watching and in prayer.

Alas the day,

When the grim Duke, her father, came in haste,
And hailed her Queen of England ! Then a cloud
Arose before her eyes ; yet looking up,
She calmly said this evil must not be,
For that she sought no earthly diadem,
Nor less felicity than there to reign
Among the shining company of Saints
In Christ's own Kingdom. But he heeded not.
He urged his policies, his cherished hopes,
His house's glory, and the Nation's weal,
In her concentrated—fairest of a line
Of monarchs mighty over land and sea.
Then much she pleaded to be spared this doom :

She was too weak—she was too young—unschooled—
The world was old, and grey, and full of snares ;
And rather would she dwell in peace with heaven,
Amidst her own free thoughts, than rule a realm.
To read and meditate thro' quiet days—
To sit at Plato's feet in large content—
This were more blessed than to mount the throne :
Therefore she prayed him that she might have peace.
But he waxed warm, and in his eagerness,
He bade, besought, entreated ; till at length,
Urged by her duty, by her love constrained,
Reluctant, yet resigned, she bowed to him
As 'twere to Fate ; and like a victim sad
To stately sacrifice she straight was borne.
They decked her beauty with a regal robe ;
Upon her gentle head they placed a crown,
And set her on the seat of mighty kings.
With her calm eyes she heeded not her pomp,
Yet much it wearied her : it vexed her rest—
It dulled her days with heaviness and gloom—
As 'twere a dead man's hand, it touched her heart,
Cold, freezing cold, forbidding her to smile.
A shadow darkened o'er her, 'neath whose frown
Her spring of youth seemed withering into age,
And all its flowers were falling, leaf by leaf.

But when unburdened from her royalty,
Albeit by men most cruel, she arose
As from a troubled dream, and saw once more
The heaven's clear face, and felt her spirit strong.
In high majestic meekness she went forth
From the state-palace to the dungeon drear,
Which her pure presence hallowed to a shrine;
Thence to the scaffold, where stern, bearded men,
Wrinkled with treason, mailed against remorse—
Were wont to quail beneath the headsman's stroke—
There in the cold grey of the winter-morn,
She stood unblanched amid the blighted bloom
Of her brief eighteen summers. Calm, composed,
With heaven on her lips, and in her eyes,
The pain of patience, and the peace of faith,
She looked upon her doom, and saw no fear.
Some words she uttered to the pitying crowd,
Touching their hearts as if an angel spoke.
Then unto God her praying looks she turned,
Then bowed her head, and yielded her white soul.
And thus she died for evermore to live.—
In form of one so gentle and so young,
A mind so rich with lore, a heart with love,
So brave a martyr, and a saint so true,
The world hath seen not these three hundred years.

Three hundred years have silvered the hoar walls :
These desolate chambers have been bright and dim
With all life's shine and shadow. They have heard
Loud shouts of revelry, low sighs of grief.
Old lords in silence died ; old servants wept
And shook their grey heads in amazement dumb,
Seeing that power and high nobility
Could stoop to death. But young inheritors
Came gaily, with the morning on their brow,
And sable sorrow blossomed into smiles.
Gay pageants passed in at the archèd gate ;
Banquets were spread ; bright dames and damosels
Lit the dim hall with sunshine of their looks ;
Up in the merry morn, a gallant train
With hawk and hound forth issued to the chase,
And with their shoutings, hill and valley rang.
At eventide retired, soft voices low,
And eyes, the stars of twilight, made discourse
Most tender-sweet, most eloquent of love,
While the swift hours in ecstacy stood still
Till the pale moon surprised them from mid-heaven.
All now are less than shadows. Nought remains
But silence, and these ruins, and the charm
Of her, the young, the beautiful, the blest,
The ten days' Queen ; whose memory enshrined

Is like a consecration on the ground.—
Time wears to dust the boastful monuments ;
He frowns upon the Proud and blots their names.
But o'er the memories of the Good he broods,
Like Night o'er all the glories of the stars,
Keeping them bright for ever. Tenderly,
With reverent care, he cherishes *her* fame,
Even as a lover cherishes the charms
Of his dead love, and fills his yearning soul
With the great image of her grace divine,
That shines more glorious thro' the darkening years.
Here, too, Time lingers, touching lovingly
The crumbling walls, the turrets, and the towers ;
Turning to beauty their old stubborn use,
Smoothing their rude strength into gentle grace.

ST. ANTHONY.

STOUT Saint, thy strife is grievous sore
 With human hands 'gainst hellish hosts ;
 Thy peace is grievous, plagued with ghosts
 Of buried sins that sleep no more.

The world oft creeps 'twixt heaven and thee ;
 Old passions still retain their fires,
 And still thy most devout desires
 Are touch'd with carnal leprosy.

By day, earth's beauty, like a wanton's lure,
 Prompts to forbidden joys. Temptations teem
 On every side : the sunshine is a snare ;
 The flowers a smile of sinful joyance wear ;
 And all thy years of penance seem a dream
 Of death-in-life ; and Heaven no more is sure.

But oh, what nights are thine—what shuddering nights !
 What unimagined sounds, what fearful sights,
 Shatter the silence and the gloom ! What doubts
 In tempests shake the soul—what fiendish routs

Encompass thee around, to tempt or daunt
Thy spirit's truth, with wile, and threat, and taunt

E'en now the time of trial is renewed :
Again must thou maintain the lingering feud
With powers malign ; and spite thy mailèd will,
Thy heart beats loud, thy blood creeps thick and chill.
The air is heavy with a weight of dread,
And o'er the face of things a shade is spread
Of hovering evil. Now bursts the mad thunder
Over thy naked head ; the earth reels under
Thy feet ; and far above the tempest's swell,
Leaps forth in mingled hiss, and shriek, and yell,
The jubilant cry of liberated Hell.
Wings of foul demons flap the midnight-air ;
Thy murky cell is lighted with the glare
Of baleful fiendish eyes ; and myriad shapes
Swarm round, of bearded pards and grinning apes,
With fascinating stare and filthy leer ;
And dragonish creatures, breathing fire, flock near,
And nearer still ; and all obscene abortions
That e'er mocked life with frightfullest distortions
Of form and feature, shrivel up thy sight
With horrid mouthings, and shoot out their spite
In howls that shiver thro' thee.—

Yet unshook

In spirit, thou bear'st all. Forth dost thou look
Unto the end, and with calm fortitude
Still thou bear'st all. And tho' temptations, strewed
Like flowers of summer, veil grim terror's thrall,
And thy cave grows into a palace hall,
Outspread with banquets fit for emperors,
Heaped with the choicest of earth's teeming stores,
The first of every clime and season's growth ;
While all the laughing juices of the South
Ripple in golden goblets, and bright trains
Of smiling servitors wait round, and strains
Of most delicious music fill the air ;
And bevies of sweet maids, surpassing fair,
With languishing graces and entralling looks,
Woo thee to dalliance in soft twilight-nooks :
Yet still, brave Saint, thou standest firm and true ;
Tho' with strong wrestlings thou canst not subdue
The evil heart entirely. Stern and hard
Is the long strife, yet albeit soiled and scarred
By the thick onsets of besetting sin,
Thy soul may rest assured, and trust to win
The blessed goal at last. The Saints defend,
And hold thee in their keeping, till the end !

M A R T I N.

—
PART I.

WITHIN the shadow of the city's splendour,
A race of injured men toiled wearily,
And bowed their heads, and hid their faces pale
From the proud world, and from the pitying heaven.
Early and late, in one accustomed place,
O'er one dull task, with one dead finger-touch,
They laboured, and still laboured, and almost
Forgot they lived. No respite, no relief !
To-day passed by them e'en as yesterday,
And yet the coming morrow brought no change.
They seemed enchanted, never to escape
The whirling engines and the evermore
Satiety of sameness ; or they seemed
For some great sin to penal woe condemned,
Drearly treading round, and round, and round,
In circles narrowing unto utter death.
Nor did they know their evil plight, nor dream

Of nobler destiny, nor did they dread
A darker doom ; but cowed and spiritless,
Without the heart to hope or to despair,
Subdued to what they suffered, they endured,
With a strange apathy whate'er befel,
As 'twere the infliction of remediless fate.

Thus as they dwelt apart, before their eyes
Each day a tide of glory came and went
Unheeded : Noons of splendour, nights of stars,
Deeps within deeps of mystery and beauty,
Around, and underneath, and overhead,
Opened in vain. Sweet Spring, with all her smiles
And songs and blowing blossoms, cheered them not ;
Summer they only knew by length of days,
And glare of smirched sunshine ; Autumn's pomp
They ne'er beheld ; but Winter's cold they felt,
And cowered in the keen wind. For them in vain
Had deathless poets sung, and sages taught.
Around them glorious was the world of books,
Wherein were peaceful continents, wide waving
With harvests of all time, and where serene
'Mid seas of calm and tides of sunsets grand,
Lay faery realms and islands fortunate
And gardens of delight. But all in vain.

Still moiling on, and 'on, they nothing saw
Beyond the finger's point, or the hour's need.

Amid this toiling throng, young Martin stood :
He yearned to lift their darkness to the light ;
He yearned to be their guide and minister ;
To set the mark of Godhead on their brow,
And wake the slumbering Angel in their heart,
That they might rise in perfect manliness.
For he was quickened with exalted thoughts,
Was bravely kind and loving chivalrous ;
Would raise his arm for the oppressed and weak ;
Would make his heart a refuge and a home
For all the wretched, and there shield them all.
Not in the dreariness where poor men dwell
Was his youth nurtured. As he grew in years,
Fortune came tow'rds him with a golden prize,
And wooed him smiling. But he turned from her—
He turned from paths of world's prosperity,
And urged by fine ambition, cast his hope
With men that suffer—aiming to arise
Among them, not above them, and advance
In their grand onward march. A devotee
Of love and freedom and fraternity,
Right true was he ; and all his heart and brain

And soul and strength were fused into one fervour
Of aspirations glorious.—Yes, (he deemed)
The world hath gone wrong these six thousand years,
But Right will come most surely. Man is one,
And he hath one great heart. The time will come !
The rich shall hear the pleadings of the poor ;
The strong shall stoop to elevate the weak ;
And God shall reign, and men shall brothers be,
One Father in heaven, one family on earth.
But 'tis the People must awake their lords.
The People's strength is like the primal rock,
Lowest in earth, yet piercing all above.
The People's Atlantean shoulders bear
The weight and pressure of the empires world,
And when this Giant rouses, all is stirred.
Then live the People ! Live to higher life—
Live brave and truthful, blest and elevate,
With lofty thoughts in noble deeds exprest,
And faith divine in earth regenerate,
With the clear heavens beyond ! O live the Poor
Strong in their sufferance, great in lowness,
Stronger and greater in their love and trust.
O live they hand to hand, and heart to heart,
Sworn in the covenant of brotherhood,
And rule the world, and turn it to their light !

It shall be mine to serve these wary ones.
These men that are but breathing monuments
Of buried souls—say rather, these poor souls
Not buried, but unborn—I'll call them forth,
And feed them with high thoughts and glorious hopes,
And clothe them with dominion. I will touch
These dark, dumb hearts with love's omnipotence,
And they shall rise like monarchs of the world,
And climb the heavens in joy.—To this intent
He spake :—

“ O rouse ye, and lift up your brows,
For God doth reign, and ye are all his sons—
Dear brothers of His Christ! Still He doth reign—
And tho' ye turn unheeding from His grace,
And tho' ye hide your faces from His glory,
In pain, and worse despair,—He reigneth still !
Arise, prepare ye, for Redemption comes !
But ye must conquer darkness for the light,
Fighting with sword of thought and shield of truth,
And ye must tread all baseness 'neath your feet,
And make the circle of your life entire
As one heroic act ! Ye must combine
In high nobility of brotherhood—
In a grand Chivalry of love and faith ;

And each must be the champion of All,
And All must stand for each.”

Thus did he speak
To those pale workers—but they heeded not ;
Or failed to apprehend. Then he resumed :—

“ Lo ye are lords of earth and heirs of heaven ;
And there two Spirits like bright Angels wait .
To lead ye on to your high destiny.
Knowledge is one : she cometh like the morn
O'er land and sea triumphant. Backward rolls
In dire confusion, Night's old Anarchy,
With troops of demons foul and sprites unblest,
Phantasms of Error, Ignorance, and Fraud,
Of Blight and Famine, Pestilence and Plague,
And Death himself, nigh vanquished. At her feet
A new world wakes rejoicing ; in her hands
She bears the first-fruits and the flowers of time.
In light and joy she comes. Soft fall her steps
As snows upon the night ; yet 'neath her tread
Grim bulwarks built of pilèd centuries
Totter to their foundations. Thrones and Powers,
Ancient as Evil, and once strong as Fate,
Turn pale at her approach, and quake like Fear.
She makes the tyrant tremble in his pride ;

But unto you, poor toilers, unto you,
With all her kingdoms round her, and her glory,
She cometh, stooping like a suppliant,
Your weary life to gladden and to bless.

The other Spirit is pure gentleness,
And Beauty is her name. Yet she completes
The circle of all power, and the grandeur
Of Knowledge softens into her sweet grace.
Her halo is of sunset and the dawn,
Her garland woven of the seasons four ;
And in her mien and mould are all the charms
Which Art hath e'er conceived, or Nature shaped.
She smiles on ye so kindly, day and night :
Her love fails never. In your dreary homes
As gently as a sunbeam she would glide,
And smiling, smooth your gloom and soothe your pain,
And lead ye upward, higher and still higher,
From star to star of heaven-aspiring hope.

O brothers, follow these twin Spirits bright,
And they will take ye along pleasant ways
To worlds whereof ye dream not—goodly realms
Of power supreme, of wonder and delight,
And nearer, nearer, to the blissful mansions

Of the eternal home. Yea, to the verge
Of the sweet Land of Promise they will lead,
Where radiant Faith, their elder sister, waits—
O, follow, follow !”

Still they heeded not ;—
Or as a dim thought flickered thro’ the film
Of their poor eyes, and faded, vacantly
They gazed a space, then o’er their labour bent
So sullenly, that if high heaven had ope’d
With all its splendours, and bright angel-forms
Had issued thence with tidings of great joy,
It seemed they scarce would look. Yet one there was,
A young man, wrinkled with unquiet thoughts,
Who turned, and thus his discontent outpoured :—

“ ’Tis bootless effort. Thou may’st teach and preach
Till doomsday, all in vain. For not the might
Of Knowledge, nor of Beauty, can prevail
Against the misery which devours our days.
Labour is life ! But the dull stagnancy
Of weariness—the droning, droning motions
Repeated without end, while toilers pale
Grow more and more like that they work withal—
This is mere death ! And o’er this desert-doom
Knowledge falls fruitless as the gentle rain

Upon Sahara's sands ; and Beauty beams
As barren-cold as borealis splendours
Over the Polar snows. Oh, I can speak
With bitter emphasis upon this theme ;
For I have known what 'tis to chafe and fret
'Gainst an oppression which the loathing thought
Shaped to a demon, deaf as Destiny,
And blind as Fortune, with a cruel scourge
And grasp relentless. I have worked and worked
'Gainst Nature's grain till it is grown awry
And warpt and shrunken. I have borne a load
And an infliction—not of things that pass,
But of a pressure, equable as air,
Continuous as time, and yet withal
Intolerable as torture. No surcease,
No intermission of the weariness,
Which came and came, as 'twere a slow drip-drop
Of water falling on a naked nerve
Until it worked like madness ! It may be
My o'erkeen mind its misery creates ;
Perchance I cannot bear what happier men
Less sensitive, regard not. Yet I know
The curse of thousands is their grinding toil—
The load of joyless days—to which opposed,
Their spirit's force is weak as feeble breath,
Sighing itself away 'gainst dungeon-bars."

So spake that Malcontent, then turned aside ;
And Martin pondered long, and stood perplexed,
As if arrested by unwelcome truth
He could not gainsay, yet could scarce believe.
And still the fated toilers plied their task
In their accustomed place. The long, long day
Their life went round, unchanging as the wheels ;
Then through the night in discontent they pined,
Or by necessity for mere relief
They blindly rushed to violence and vice.

But now a swift change overwhelmed them quite.
There was devised a marvellous machine,
Which seemed a thing of fine intelligence,
With hundred-handed force. So cunningly,
So wondrous cunningly, it plied its wheels,
That now a thousand men might fold their hands,
For all their work was ended. On the instant,
From the world's movements they appeared disjoined,
Loosed from life's hold, and sternly cast adrift,
Outside of all things. Now from their long trance
Sorely they waked ; and each in other's face,
Bewildered, stared ; for their calamity
They could not comprehend. No help, no hope,
No calling for them more ! And to increase

All other sorrows, Winter with his scourge
Upon them fell like tyrant merciless.

A bitter season—bitter keen it was :
Storms beat their limbs ; black frost ate in their bones ;
The east wind pierced them like a whetted knife ;
And from the desolate region where they dwelt
Came moans and doleful cries and curses dread,
Such as might come from lost ones in the Pit,
And turn the angels pale. There, drearily,
They sank unshielded from the darts and fangs
Of the envenomed and unpitying cold.

Here lay a woman dying in slow pain,
Her husband gazing on her with hard eyes,
In apathy of grief. When all was o'er,
And she had blessed God's mercy for the close
Of her long suffering, he started up,
And felt a sudden sense of loneliness ;
And yet he felt that it was well with her,
Since she would never faint nor hunger more.

In the next chamber were a married twain,
Scarce more than boy and girl. He stood aloof,
Sullen and stern, while two poor wretched things,

That should be children, clung about his knees,
And with their piteous and unchildish looks
Asked why he brought them into life to weep.
She, forlorn mother, miserable wife,
Crouched by the fireless grate. So desolate !
Like a lost creature in bewilderment
Of woe uncomprehended. Pitiful
'Twas to behold her with her white young face,
And the dull pathos of her vacant look,
Pain-stricken, withered into worse than age.
In fear and pain she crouched, nursing her babe,
And when it cried she held it to her breast,
But nature's founts were dry, and then she swooned
Out of the hearing of its feeble wail.

Alone in dreary privacy of sorrow,
A widowed mother hung over her child—
A delicate girl, too gentle for this world.
Poor thing ! in anguish she had worked and worked
Against the labouring cough and bating breath,
Till this hard winter all her task was done.
Wrapt in an old rug, on the floor she lay,
Consumed with hectic fever. Beautiful,
Fearfully beautiful, consumption burned
Thro' the transparency of her thin cheeks,

And in her large eyes lustrous. Beautiful,
Serenely beautiful was her repose
When the last sigh had parted from her lips.
'Twas like heaven's peace in that forlorn abode :
Life's wretchedness by holy death redeemed,
And consecrated with a grace divine.
The dead lay there in such untroubled rest,
That the bereavèd mother could not mourn,
But gazing on that placid face, she wished
That she were also dead, to be so blest,
To sleep so softly and ne'er wake to weep.

A group of sullen men their discontents
Told each to other. Fiercely one exclaimed :—
“ Why what a life is this ! what is’t to be,
And suffer so, and never see an end ?
Would they would kill us by a sudden stroke,
Not starve us piece by piece ! Would they would use
Fire, sword, or poison, or the hangman’s cord,
Not gnaw our hearts away with famine’s tooth,
Which is not deemed plain murder ! ”

“ Yes, forsooth, ”

Exclaimed another, “ Better ’twere to die
Than to sit here in darkness, while our babes
Perish before us, and our poor wives pine,
Stabbing our hearts with their pale patient looks ! ”

“ And yet the preacher cries, ‘ Believe in God ! ’ ”
Another muttered with a bitter laugh—
“ Why, what is God to us, or we to Him ?
Doth He not sit there as in mockery
Of our distress—doth He regard our cry ?
Are we not men grown even envious
Of the stalled beasts, and of the fowls of air ?
And yet the preacher cries—‘ Believe in God ! ’ ”

“ Nay, nay, blaspheme not ! ” cried a hoary sire,
“ For after all our troubles, sure and swift
Comes death, and then the judgment. What are we,
That we should question Him ! And yet, and yet”—
The old man prayed in anguish—“ God, O God,
Thou know’st our weakness, Thou behold’st our woe—
Wilt Thou not stoop to us ? O if indeed
Thou art our Father, make our cause Thine own !
If we’re Thy children, help us in our need !
O do Thou help us ere we turn from Thee,
For our poor hearts are hardening ! ”

Thus the poor workless suffered and complained,
And cursed and prayed forlorn. And day by day
Their discontent increased, with bodings dire.
For Hunger, the bold Anarchist, will force

Thro' all allegiance with his rebel-thoughts,
Turning respect and honour to contempt ;
And so it chanced that as the faces sad
Of the desolate poor grew leaner, they assumed
A fearfuller expression, fierce comprest
To lawless meanings, glooming ominous ;
Till one drear night, their pining numbers pale,
Ripe for revolt, they gathered, in such mood
As gives no truce to patience. From their depths—
Their chambers foul, and subterranean glooms—
They issued ghastly, like a spectral host.
From regions of blind alleys and dim courts,
They came in darkening mass, which larger swelled
At every turn, with noises like the surge
Of many waters mingling. On they rolled
Thro' lanes and by-ways, on thro' streets and squares,
Pouring along—a deluge of distress—
As if towhelm all comfort in the land.
At length they came unto an open space,
And there they stood,—so lost and desolate,
They seemed a people from some lower world
Of unknown darkness, or an outcast tribe
Blasted by heaven's judgments. Pale and lean,
Pinched, puny men, with manhood nigh outworn,
And in their poor marred faces no least sign

But mere despair grown reckless—there they stood,
(What could they more?) a tragic spectacle
O'er which the gods might weep ! There stood they still,
Hungry and cold, and knew not their intent ;
Till One sprang boldly in their midst, and thus,
With fierce wild looks and frantic gestures, shrieked—

“ Why stand we here agape, with folded hands,
As if our miseries rained down from heaven ?
Look, there's our demon foe, whose iron limbs
Grind us to powder, and whose breath of steam
Blights us like pestilence, and drowns our cries
In hissing laughter ! Lo, how wondrous well
The marvellous machine speeds on its way !
Always it toileth with a hundred hands,
And needs nor food nor rest. Poor wretched slaves,
There is no need for ye, whom this new power
Hath superseded quite. There is no place
In the full world, nor function in its work.
Ye are but ‘surplus’ ! O unfortunate,
Ye are mere ‘surplus’ ! Whither will ye go ?
What will ye do ? Your spirits are bowed down—
Your feeble sinews naught avail in fight
With cold iron pitiless. Go to your graves !
There ye will pine no more, nor feel the smart

Of want and insult. There ye will have room,
Nor overpopulate that fair confine.
Go—for your lordlings bid ye. Mark the sneer,
The brutal scowl which says—*What do you here?*
Go to your pauper graves! Hah, hah! 'twere well
Would the earth yawn, and tomb us where we stand,
For we are ‘surplus,’ and our hungry looks
Afflict the proud and lofty. What, ye slaves,
Will ye not die? then starve no more, but live!
Up, up, and show them that your hands, tho’ weak,
Can win redress, and even yet strike home!”

Stung by this frenzied speech, the multitude
O’ the instant felt their misery, and at once
They started up to do some desperate deed,
They knew not, eared not, what. But they would make
The tyrants feel their wrath—yea, they would burst
In Mammon’s gloomy holds, and scatter wide
His devilish enginery—they would bring down
The boasted triumphs of man’s cursed skill
In heaps of wreck. “Down with new-fangled arts
Which cheapen flesh and blood! Down with the crew
That revel while we pine!” Thus shouting hoarse,
Quick tow’rd the whirling factory they sped;
When suddenly young Martin with bold front
And fearless words opposed them.

" Madmen, hold ! "

He shouted :—“ Fierce and helpless, will ye rush
Headlong to ruin ? will ye aggravate
Tenfold your misery ? Ay, because ye pine,
Because ye suffer, will ye for that sin
Heap hell on your own heads ? What boots this stir,—
Can your weak hands bind strong Necessity ?
Dream ye this idle fury will avail
Against the forces which upheave the world,
And run fresh life-blood thro' his million veins ?
As well go fight the wind, or chain the sea !
As well oppose earth's motion, or rebel
'Gainst the spheres shining in their ordered rounds.”

These words their steps arrested. Fixed they stood
In the act to strike. And now his vantage seizing,
Martin sought farther to restrain their hands,
And in their faces dash the light of truth,
With power remedial. But in haste arose
The man of strife, the spirit of unrest,
Who first aroused them. Eagerly he sprang,
Flinging fierce words, like firebrands, in their midst,
Stinging their spirits with their wrongs and shames ;
And then denouncing all the rich and great,
With such immitigable bitterness,

As if his very veins, instead of blood,
Ran burning gall and poison. His wild ways
Compelled the crowd—they kindled with his rage—
They fed their misery with his venomous words—
They rallied round him, and with loud acclaims,
Hailed him their chief and champion ! “ Up, away ! ”
He ended, furious :—“ Now, for a brave deed !
Let our enkindled wrath flame out in fire
To illuminate our tyrants, and emblaze
Upon this night, black as our misery,
The story of our wrongs and our revenge ! ”

Some desperadoes in the mob now sprang,
Like fiends broke loose. Rascality and crime
Mixed their foul leaven with despair and want,
And all was one wild ferment. Wrath waxed mad,
Example was contagion. Instantly
An uncontrollable impulse—a desire
For some great mischief, even were it merely
Their own destruction, seized them ; and they rushed
Swift to the mighty mill. More huge and grim
Than ten baronial castles, now it towered,
Beaten on all sides by a fearful wind
Of yells and curses: such a storm of sound
Pouring and roaring from ten thousand throats—

Infinite roar—mere chaos of mad noise!—
Strokes followed shouts—the doors were burst, some hand
Applied a light—the building was a-blaze;
And round the flames the exulting spoilers reeled
Like frenzied maniacs in a devil's dance.—
Ah! it was fearful 'mid that lurid glare
To see those whirling faces without end
Contorted wholly to one baleful look
Grim-fierce as famine, reckless as despair!—
And thus they triumphed, while the eager flames
Sprang thro' the windows, leapt unto the roof,
And driving upward, like a mighty wedge,
Pierced thro' the solid darkness. All at once
Arose the dreaded cry—“They come! they come!”
And fifty soldiers, with drawn sabres gleaming
In the fierce glare, broke on them. That mere gleam
Of cold steel dashed them into utter rout.
Dismayed they fled, by howling fear pursued—
All, save their leader;—he, poor rebel-chief,
Was left folorn, to cool his fevered blood,
Loaded with irons in a prison-cell.

M A R T I N.

—
PART II.

“ Were ye not mad to fight with Destiny ?
Were ye not blind, so brutishly to mar
That new-made engine, ere ye had o'erwhelmed
Genius and thought and all successive growths
Of human skill ? for that was but the fruit
And outcome of them all.” So Martin spoke
To those who late in frenzy’s fit outburst
To burn and to destroy. Now, mute they stood—
Cowed, helpless, hopeless, abject as mere worms ;
And to his questioning they hung their heads
And answered not. Then, earnest, he resumed :

“ Not curses deep nor violent hands can shake
Great Nature’s sovereignty, or touch the height
Of her calm order, which in season due
Brings all results to pass. The humble wheel
Plied by our grandames at the cottage door,
And the new engine, with its hundred hands,

Both sprang from one necessity supreme.
Changes will come, for Mind must on, and on,
Devise, construct, arrange, and new create,
For ever, without rest. The present change
Is but the second birth of changes past,
Blent with to-day's addition. The great world
Is built on change, and its solidity
Is wax in the mind's mould. Changes will come,
New arts will rise, and fresh appliances
Of power and skill will overtop the height
Of this day's proud achievements. Yet even now
The giant Conqueror, with breath of steam,
And limbs of iron, strides across the world,
And walks the waves rejoicing. 'Neath his steps
Rise populous cities. Desert-solitudes
Quicken with busy life ; and bloodless fields
Are strewn with trophies of ten thousand fights.
Kings are his vassals, and old monarchies
Own him their master. He restores the prime
Of falling states, and spreads an empire wide
O'er the unpeopled place. All climes and zones
He intertwines in close-drawn harmony,
Near and more near. He gives the teeming South
Unto the hungry North ; and hastens the time
When earth shall be one happy neighbourhood

Of linkèd lands and peoples. O my friends,
This power ye curse is your great champion
For right and freedom.”

Thus, as he discoursed,
They rose in anger, shouting, “ Give us bread,
And spare thy preachings vain !” And when he told
How skill and genius workcd for general good,
Strangely they laughed, as if 'twere a brave jest
To hear amid their woe how blest a boon
Had so undone them. “ Nay,” they said, “ Go to :
Forbear this mockery. What have *we* to do
With triumphs of man’s genius, while our toil
Is cheap as aught unneeded ? What to us
The growth of change in more transcendent forms
Of might and splendour, while we pine and die,
And have no help, no hope ? ‘Tis a brave World !
It rolls on in its pride of skill and power
And leaves us here to perish.”

“ Nay, my friends,”—
Martin spoke yet again :—“ Is’t well, is’t fit,
That man should rest his infinite faculties
On one frail fleeting chance, and when that fails
Straight sink into despair, or helpless wait
What the next wind may blow ? Why stand ye here,

As if enchanted in this narrow bound ?
Why do ye swarm, and sort with mere machines,
And herd, and breed, until your very babes
Are your competitors ? Awake, arise !
For your redemption drops not from the sky,
But must be wrought with your own hands and hearts.
Away with weak complaining, and put forth
The mighty will commanding ! The proud World
Turns his broad back upon us when we mope
In sullen gloom, but soon as we uplift
A clear bold brow, a heart to do and dare,
Then he comes round us with smiling face,
And serves us like a vassal. O my friends,
O men, my comrades, let us join our hands,
And pledge our faith in a fraternal bond ;
Like brothers let us labour each for all,
And all for each. Then these afflictive powers
Will be our ministers beneficent ;
The tyrant steam will be our mighty slave,
And iron engines toil and never tire
In our behoof. The old way is outworn—
Carve a new path. Let cogs and senseless wheels
Perform all soulless labours, that the soul
May so be urged unto more noble work,
Worthy itself. For undiscovered worlds

Of noble work yet wait our enterprize,
With depths of wealth unknown, and heights on heights
Of sumless elevation. Know ye not
The time will come when earth shall be renewed,
And want grow fabulous, and fraud and wrong
Fade into dim tradition ; when all boons
Of art and nature all mankind shall bless,
Freely as sun and rain ; when open faith
And honour shall have sway ; and even Trade
Become heroie, and dispense its gifts
To man with God-like magnanimity,
Blessing yet boasting not ! The time will come !
Then shall your sorrows cease, your hurts be healed,
And you, and I, and all of us rejoice.
O let us toil like brothers with one heart ;
So shall we bring that jubilee of love—
So shall we go forth, heralds of great joy,
And all the pomp and glory of the world
Will follow at our heels. Rich men shall learn
They also are our brothers, and no more
In selfish splendour, eating their own hearts,
Supinely revel, but rejoicing rise
To be our captains in the grand emprise
Of blessedness for All—making their names
The themes of honour, and their piles of gold
The pedestals of greatness.”

He ceased ; and many, as if roused from sleep,
Sprang up, and turned their faces to the light,
Hungry for that fair future. Wide before them
It rose in its first brightness—a new morn—
A growing hope—a blessing undefined—
A shape of light, with hands innumerable
Outstretched to aid them. Sudden eagerness
To band like brothers—instantly to share
The prosperous issues of fraternal toil
Now fired their spirits ; and still Martin urged them
With love's own fervour and untiring zeal.
In preparation of their glorious hope,
He taught them lessons of heroic truth,
Of faith and sacrifice ; and he went forth
Pleading their cause before the mighty ones,
As earnest-ardent as a young apostle
•Baptized with fire from heaven, and with power.
'Mid throngs of worldlings in the chaffering mart,
He told that dear love should precedence take
Of gold, and lands, and lordships. 'Twas foul sin
For selfish greed to hoard all benefits—
Nay, 'twas blind folly, and a wiser thrift
Would work far nobler, since the gain of each
Is in the weal of all. Therefore he urged
They should abase their pride the poor to exalt,

Like brothers true. Incredulous, they stared,
And passed him by, with measureless contempt.
It seemed a solid wall of scornful looks,
With Mammon's utmost forces—hosts on hosts,
In plates of gold impenetrably mailed,
His championship opposed. Still paused he not.
The faith of brotherhood incorporate
Grew with his very being, and possessed him
Like a strong inspiration. Yet, alas,
What room for love fraternal and heroic,
Where men are foes, and struggle as they swarm
In such close huddle straining, it might seem
The land had narrowed underneath their feet
To this one point, and they were now reduced
To fight for room to stand? What hope for love
Where hate is traffic'd in, and trade is fraud,
And all the marts are glutted with grim death?
Where hell's let loose upon the public ways,
And in the dreariness where want abides,
Vice, plague-like, spreads, all life is but disease?
Where is redemption? Shall God's kingdom come
Out of Gehenna and the Pit? I know not,
“But it *shall* come,” said Martin. “I will toil
And strive and sweat for it, and never rest
Until I die; for in a world like this,

Comfort is sottish ! Doubtless there is room
For love's great fellowship beneath high heaven,
But not here, in this ordered anarchy—
Not here, where ancient evils have the dues
Of reverend customs, and hard selfishness
Grows from the earth of England. No, not here
'Mid these o'erswarming towns and their old wrongs,
But in the wilderness across the wave,
Striking its roots into the virgin soil,
The Tree of Life may grow, with fruits of love
On broad world-shadowing branches. There supreme
In his true grandeur, bursting from the webs
Of old conventions, forms, and usages,
Enfranchised Labour, like a new-waked Giant,
For absolute dominion may outstretch
His mighty arm—his feet on the free earth,
The morning on his brow, and in his hands
The crowns of unborn empires." Thus persuaded,
He turned to those his new associates :—

" O friends, we are too many in the land,
But there's a 'world elsewhere' ! Across the wave,
On tow'rd the sunset, stretch savannahs vast
Where no man dwells. Wide continents wherethro'
Roll sea-like rivers, whose broad bosoms heave

To bear the argosies and prosperous sails
Of nations yet to be. There may we raise
The standard of new hope. There sow the seed
And reap the harvest, build the city-walls,
Ope ports of commerce, marts of merchandise,
Shaping our energy to grand results
Whereof we dream not now.—Lo, I foresee
A paradise far blooming in the wild—
The small beginnings of love's pioneers
Increasing wide with process of the suns
To happy kindreds and communities,
Rejoicing realms and singing continents,
By peaceful seas embraced and blissful skies !
O, let us hasten from this prison-house
To the broad liberty of those fair regions
That wait for our possessing ! Let us forth
To win the Good Estate where all shall thrive
By common toil enriching common stores ;
Where undivided fields with harvests bright
Of our high hopes shall bloom, and years increase
In blessings endless o'er our joys fraternal !
On let us march— I'll guide ye—yet I aim
To no cold isolation of renown—
I seek not to be chief, but only one
In a brave band of brothers. And my hope,

My love, my faith, I pledge ye ; and in trust,
My better fortunes shall be yours withal.
Then join with me, and on for victory—
On for dear freedom and the Good Estate—
Comrades, hurrah for Labour's Commonweal !”

Hurrah ! they cried rejoicing. And right soon
A goodly company as eagerly
Over the western ocean stretched their gaze,
As Israel's children in captivity
Turned tow'rd the blessed Canaan. Even now
Spring laughed away the clouds, and hid the scars
Of all earth's winters with gay greenery :
Spring broke the bondage of the ice-bound streams,
And through the meadows, leaping in the sun,
Full merrily they ran ; and round the roots
Of the old trees new-leaving ; and now loitered
In loving dalliance with the fair young flowers
That stooped to kiss them in sweet nooks embowered.
Spring touched those poor men's hearts and stirred their
blood
With motions of new life ; and in their spirits
Another spring-time, full of budding hopes
And shoots of promise, started. Wide aloof
Some wise heads shook with prophecies of ill ;

But some large noble hearts stretched hands of help.
And soon a fair ship, with those toilers freighted,
Fronted the West, with Hope upon her prow.

Fresh blew the brecze ; the vessel spread her sails ;
And o'er the deck the eager voyagers
Crowded with glowing looks and bounding hearts.
Free on the heaving billow, each arose
Dilating into greatness ; and all felt
Like heroes bent on mighty enterprise,
Sailing in glory from the dead old Past
Unto the nobler Future. Blythesome songs
Of hope they sang, and talked right cheerily
Of coming days, and wonders to be wrought :
Clear rang their voices on the freshening wind ;
Quick throbbed their pulses, and their bosoms beat
Exhilarating music. Then arose
Solemn and sad, the feeling of farewell,
As Britain's shores were fading from their sight.
“ And yet”—they said—“ 'tis hard to leave our home—
That home to love and freedom consecrate—
The England of our fathers—the dear land
Girdled with strong affections, surer far
Than the encircling waters ! Yes, 'tis hard
To leave our country, tho' she nurtured us

To toil in tears. But patriots are we,
And duty turns us from our mother-land
Since she's o'erburdened with her numerous sons.
We but depart to ease her of her woe ;
And we shall ne'er forsake her, but full soon
We'll stretch our hands to her across the sea,
And help her need from our prosperity.
Farewell, dear mother England !—Hail, all hail,
Land of the Future—wide world of the west !
Over the rolling deep we go the way
Of the old sires of freedom, and perchance
Our destiny is no less glorious
Than e'en was theirs, the wilderness who sowed
With cities fair and continents o'erspread
With thriving states and blessings manifold.
Yea, though unnoticed is our going forth,
Tho' 'tis a day of small things, it may be
The birth-day of an empire, and from hence
May date new epochs in earth's history.

Thus with anticipated glories crowned,
They reached Columbia's shore ; and tarried not ;
But sailed far onward up St. Lawrence' stream,
Thro' wilds of beauty and magnificence,
Until the place of their new home they gained.

It seemed the seat of Nature's sovereignty,
Where she sat throned amid all elements
Of grandeur and of vastness. There for ever
Rolled large and luminous waters between banks
Of lavish bloom and waste fertility.
Forests immense of immemorial pine
Girdled unbounded prairies, smoothèd o'er
With the long grass of silent centuries.
And mountains seemed the pillars of high heaven,
Left from some mighty past to be the guides
Of some far mightier future : fitting land
To nurse a race of heroes ! "O, my friends,"—
Said Martin to his comrades, gathered round
In hushèd wonder—"Surely we are cast
In this grand region for a purpose grand.
The solitude now liveth—lo, our voice
Doth end the silence of a thousand years !
Let not the jars and frets of that old world
We've left behind us enter this retreat.
But here, beneath this heaven, in the sight
Of these eternal mountains, let us live
A new and nobler life. Here join our hands,
And pledge our faith that by our hopes of bliss—
By the great Nature which embosomis us—
By the dear God of all—we'll brothers be,
And share in love one blessed destiny!"

Soon as he ceased, the company joined hands
To pledge their service to the Commonweal.
And there some moments did they stand sublime,
As on the threshold of a glorious doom.—
Then with good heart their labours they began.—
They were to merge all personal interests,
All selfish preferences of mine and thine,
In fair equality—there side by side
Toiling in concert with one common aim
To one result of good.—So they began.—
They felled the trees to build their dwelling-place,
And o'er the patient spade and peaceful plough
Right manfully they bent ; and gardens wide
They planted with fair fruits : and swelling fields
With promise sowed of harvest without end.
Among the rest, toiled Martin, soon and late ;
Cheering his mates with animating words,
Breathing his ardours o'er them—ready ever
With happy counsel, or with helping hand.
He was their strength, their shield, and their defence ;
And oft they would have faltered, but beholding
His countenance bright with hope invincible
And patient courage, they took heart again
And kindled into bravery.—

So 'twas well.—

Till in one mind, and then another, crept

The serpent thought, that though they work'd and work'd,
The expected blessing came not. Each had built
A commonwealth in his own phantasy,
But the reality took not the form
Of their particular dreams, and thence arose
A general discontent. Beneath their new
Fraternal vesture, the old selfish heart
Still unregenerate lived. And tho' somehow
They were uplifted, and their bosoms burned
With an unwonted fervour, yet what seemed
The fire of holy zeal, was but the flush
From change of air and action. Day by day
Illusions melted in the sun and rain :
The solid world thrust on them its old look ;
Long had they waited, they had travelled far,
And still their freedom and felicity
Were out of reach, like cities in the clouds.
Then Nature's grandeur, now familiar grown,
No longer touched them ; or her loftiness
Did taunt their littleness. They saw no charm
In their hard toil—no beauty in the clods
Which day by day they tilled ; and Heaven itself
Looked on them with a stern taskmaster's eye.

Anon came o'er the Commonweal a cloud
Of evil days, which 'fore the healthful face

Of Resolution would have vanished swift
As shadows from the sun. But those compeers
Were barren of the faith which breeds the courage
That can strike down impediments opposed,
And tug with Fortune and outface her frowns.
A gnawing weakness ate away their hearts ;
Mistrust and doubting paralyzed their hands ;
Confusion seized them, and in pale dismay
They sank like cowards, quelled by their own fear.
Then Martin, half-indignant, half-beseeching,
Urged new endeavour :—“ What, and do ye think
To walk on roses to the Promised Land ?”
He cried in ire : “ Nay, there’s a wilderness
Wide, waste, and wild, before us ; but strong Will
Can force a way, and Faith shall reach the end
And smile at perils past. Take better heart,
Take higher hope, my comrades ; and ’bove all
Believe ye one another. Faith alone
Preserves our unity ; and wreck will fall,
And Chaos come again, when Faith is gone !”

Silent they heard, and slightly re-assured,
Resumed their broken labours. But ’twas vain.
They were half-hearted, unbelieving men,
And could achieve naught worthy. Still pale Fear
Did paralyze their strength, while dark Mistrust —

A growing shadow, crushed them with the weight
Of pilèd mountains. Darker, and more dark,
The shadow spread :—a darkness palpable
With evils old renewed—fell greed of self,
Doubt, envy, jealousy—familiar fiends,
That curse all Commonweals, all Edens mar.
The bond fraternal was a heavy burden,
A hard oppression grievous to be borne.
Awhile they bore it, those half-hearted men,
Sullen and silent, with stern clouded brows.
And first the evil eye ill thoughts revealed ;
Then evil tongues were loosed, and murmurs rose,
And whispers of dark import, swift increasing
To hubbub of fierce jars. Then waxing bold,
The strong man claimed precedence of the weak ;
And every one his selfish ends proclaimed
The ultimate of social blessedness.
The discord swelled ; each bosom seemed a nest
Of snakes and scorpions, darting poisonous tongues
To sting all others ; till in bitter rage
They burst the thraldom of their fellowship
And free to work their sorrow, stood divided
In attitude of battle, each with all.

Now Martin, faltering, paused : poor tender heart
Whose love was turned to mockery ! Sad, downcast,

Amid the wreck of his high purposes
He bowed his head, as might a devotee
Lonely and weary in a ruined fane,
'Mid shattered forms of fallen Divinities.
Now might he meditate on chance and change,
And popular movements leading unto naught ;
Weighing his wisdom who doth build his hope
On shifting sands, or on unstable men.
Within him rose a voice—“ What cheer, what cheer ?
Thou seest how multitudes are drawn by dreams,
And cast adrift by every wind that blows ;
Thou seest how their diversities combine
As oil with water, or as brass with clay :—
With eager championship thou did'st aspire
To set this wrong world right, and thou hast sped
Like many another famous architect
Of airy castles. Still the world rolls on,
And goes its wonted way, and heeds thee not.—
Wilt thou not yield, and cease from efforts vain
For what hath never been, and ne'er may be ?”—
Then he looked up, and heart and hope returned
To quell the thought of yielding ; and he said :—
“ No, I may never yield. I've worked and worked
With all my heart and brain, and soul and strength,
And though to-day my labour seemeth vain,

It is not vain—it is not all in vain.
I trust the future : mighty is my Faith,
And evil days, mischance, defeat itself,
Can touch her never, nor can doubt impair.
The years to come are her sure heritage ;
And forth she goes, a conqueror uncrowned,
Riding like Destiny on wingèd Time.
When all beside is gone, I still have faith,
And faith is patience."—But this patience calm
Was troubled now by manifold regrets
For errors past—for high aims that o'erlooked
And overleaped success—o'erhasty zeal
To win the world, with its six thousand winters
Of iron selfishness at once dissolving
In love's perennial summer :—glorious dream,
He trusted with so large belief, e'en while
His faith was lesser than a grain of seed
Which is content to *grow*. Withal, the voice
Of his own spirit woke, and urged austere
His aim was vanity, and could no less
Than come to naught : for there's no good Estate
Apart from God's high governance and grace ;
And till they are His sons, in very truth,
Men ne'er can be true brothers.—Self-reproved,
Humbled in spirit, he arose and went

To those his late associates, where they stood
In enmity forlorn, and he besought them
With much entreaty, yea, almost with tears,
To turn with him again.—

“ We all were wrong,” he said, “ We all have sinnèd
And come short of heaven’s blessing. Poor and weak,
We could not stand upon our empty dreams—
We could not be true brothers, so unheeding
Of our great Father, who in pity stooped
To bless us, but we would not. Oh, before Him
Let us bow down, and yield to His high will—
Making our common weakness the new bond
Of our communion. If no Good Estate
Of undivided fields and common stores
Be ours to accomplish, still may we be rich
In commerce sweet of kindness and good works—
Living, if not as brothers of one blood,
Yet as God’s children all! So may we reach
With lowlier hope a loftier destiny.
So lay a State’s foundations in the heart
Of simple truth and faith. So raise the world
Nearer to heaven, and make it worthier
Of the pure stars’ beholding.”

They heard, and apprehended. Weary grown
Of barren wrath and conflict, they took thought
For reconciliation ; and with mediate aid
Of Martin's counsel, they again joined hands—
Not standing now among the shining clouds,
But on the brown soil, which its sober hue
Gave to their thought and hope.—Again they turned
To till the ground, to ply their several crafts—
No longer equal ; but each man distinct,
With his free capabilities around him,
Hither and thither, branching in fruition
Of liberty and power. Now from the world
Passed the dark shadow ; and there was new light
New hope, new charm in all things ; for right well
With every stroke of toil, the toiler knew
He was achieving somewhat ; so his spirit
Throbbed with the pride of Labour, while his heart
In love drew nearer unto mother Earth,
And the great heart of Nature. Yea, to him
'Twas proud delight, 'twas grand to be—to feel
His footing firm beneath him, and his place
Fixed to the centre, while he stood erect
Beneath the kindling glory of the heaven,
Fronting the duties, that like earnest friends,
Pressed round to help him, and to urge him on
To conflicts brave, and might, and victory.

In their old life in England, crammed and pent,
'Twas not sharp want, nor cold, nor nakedness,
That gave the keenest smart ; but 'twas the sense
Of stifled power—the hunger of their souls
For some far nobler fate, they knew not what,
Save by dumb cravings and unshaped desires.
Now that unspoken misery was past ;
And each man felt, in his particular,
He had a place and function, and a work
Worthy his manhood, with results of might
On his right arm depending. Thence proceeded
Self-trust, and dignity, whereby they stood
Lords of the present ; while the great To-come,
Shaped by their hand, shone glorious afar.
Now they 'gan revel in their conquering force,
Making their toils their pleasures. Some rude wills
Stamp all their rudeness on the things they wrought,
While some fine natures fashioned their high thought
To lovely forms and graces manifold,
Turning to beauty what they did for use.
These sought high labours for the soul's high need.
But they learned also, as the little seed
Draws vigour from the elod, and cleaves its way,
Budding into summer ; so the soul
May grow thro' earthiness of coarsest toil,

To gain therefrom a finer element
And reach its crown of light.—Then as the time
Increased in fulness, many grew devout
'Neath admonition of the absolute heavens.
'Twas even, as say old prophet and new sage,
By God's own hand, in sunbeams, it is writ—
True work is worship ! For the sure results
Of labour's process pain and doubt disperst,
And nourished pious faith in laws supreme
Whereby God also worketh, now and ever.

Meanwhile, on Martin the kind heaven smiled :
A glory shone around, and he beheld
One that might be an angel, were she not
More blessed, being a woman.
Love looked from her sweet eyes, and simple truth
Clothed her in light, and shone in all her ways
With a most winning charm ; and glowing there,
For him amid the wilderness she bloomed—
The Flower of all the world. 'Twas the old tale—
The maiden's heart flushed open like a rose,
The lover drank its fragrance from her lips.
She was his spirit's bride—his bosom's Own.
To her by strong compulsion he was drawn,
And she leaned o'er him, O so tenderly,

Her face so radiant with her open soul,
So gracious kind, that he was wholly blest !
And strange it seemed, that with her love compared,
His late high aims and swelling purposes,
Freedom, Equality, the Good Estate,
And brotherhood, and general blessedness,
Were but of small concern.—In converse sweet,

“ Dear love,” said he, “ Methinks I’m like a bird
That thro’ strange skies hath flown and o’er wide seas,
And perched on pyramids, and come at last
Within the shadow of a lowly roof
To build its humble nest. For I did wander
Thro’ airy regions, among clouds of dreams,
Soaring so far to stoop unto my home,
E’en to thy nestling bosom, my Beloved.”

“ And wilt thou bide in thy dear home ? ” she said,
“ Or wilt thou wander more, as doth a bird
That sings and revels thro’ bright summer days,
And flies from winter’s frown ? ”

“ O, trust me well.—
Love knows not winter’s name ; nor frowns nor fears
Can ever come where thou art”—he replied

With kindling ardour ;—“ for with thee is light,
And joy, and peace, and all that is not evil.
And I am rich in thee, yea, I am great !
Thy love doth crown me with a glorious crown,
Far nobler than an Empire’s diadem
Be-gemmcd with kingdoms ; and upon the swell
Of thy true breast enthroned, I reign so grand
This world hath room for no felicity
Nor greatness beyond mine. ‘Tis sumless joy,
The rapture of content ! O, thou dear heart,
I cannot speak what I have found in thee—
I cannot name thee in thy priceless worth,
Nor count thy rare perfections ; but believe it,
Thou art my very friend, and next to God,
I give thee reverence true. No more I’ll roam—
But here beneath the blessing of thy smile,
And of these liberal heavens, will I bide.
Once I did dream of world-wide jubilee—
Once in young eagerness and passionate zeal,
I could have folded all men to my heart,
But now I can clasp thee—and rest content !”

“ No, not content !”—returned she, with a look
Sweetly reproachful—“ Thou wilt surely love
All men the more because thou lovest me.

Thou shalt not rest content, but rise aspiring ;
Thou shalt be rich by gaining while thou givest ;
Thou shalt go forth among thy brother-men,
A teacher of the new love thou hast learned—
A champion of the heart, the poor worn heart,
Long bruised with hardness and estranging thoughts.
No, not content ! Thy days are full of hope,
And thou hast energy for mighty deeds,
With soul to kindle in heroic blaze.
Yet I'd not have thee glorious in the power
That starts abroad like Lightning, hurling fate ;
But in the love which worketh like great Light
That greens the earth and glorifies the year,
And makes no stir obtrusive. Even thus
Shalt thou work, Dearest !”

“ Thanks, sweet monitor,”

He answered ; “ Yes, unto my uttermost
I will love all, and work for human weal,
Tho' not with heart-leaps of my younger zeal.
For I have learned of high fraternity
My former theories were shadows merely
Of a truth which they contained not. Cold and thin,
They touch'd not life, yet round about it hung
Like fleeting ghosts upon the skirts of morn.
And I will teach my lesson—I will teach

That there is no redemption without faith,
And faith must come of love, and woman's love
Alone can win men to love one another
In true fraternal kind. I will proclaim
E'en by thy gentle self, that he who loves,
As I do thee, for noblest brotherhood
Doth more than he who draws a multitude
To work and feed together."

Forth he rose,
Cheered by her proudest smile, and turned again
To hail his friends and fellows. Deep regard
Constrained them, and they pondered well his words.
He told them he had read new revelations
Of life and duty in sweet woman's eyes ;
And he had learned they never should have boon
Of certain peace or prosperous days assured,
Save by her guardian care. No Good Estate,
Till hallowed by her ministry each hearth
Became an altar, and each home a shrine.
He told of love which should renew the earth—
Told how that image of their fairest hope
Had been adored with centuries of prayer—
The Mother and the Child ! Divinity
Of glorified Woman, bearing in her arms

The new-born Saviour of the suffering world.
And in their blindness the significance
Of that old worship had escaped them quite.
Still Woman was the angel-minister,
To bless the weary Present, and inspire
The bright redeeming Future. They must turn
From their hard ways, and learn such reverence,
With love so lofty for her as should make
Her influence religion. In such kind
Bowing their strength before her gentleness,
Their separate manhoods should be knit together
In common chivalry ; and since naught base
Might stand in her clear presence, they would grow
Out of all selfish grossness ; honour's star
Would shine upon their brow, and noble deeds
Become their daily customs. Then ere long,
The shrine of Family made consecrate,
Fraternity's grand temple might be reared,
Roofed by the general skies. And then might come
The Good Estate and Commonweal divine,
With God in heaven, and the God-like People
His ministers on earth, sublime and free.

NOVEMBER SONG.

The hills are hid in chilly mist ;
Cheerless and bare are the forest-bowers ;
Drearly wanders the moaning wind ;
Wearily droop the doomèd hours.
On the sodden ground, by the sullen streams,
The flowers welter and wither ;
And sad boding thoughts the falling leaves
Waft silently hither and thither ;
And the dull dark sky and the bare bleak earth
Are rolled and mingled together.

But amid these dreary days, good Friends,
Let us look before and after ;
And shake off the load of the leaden clouds
And stifle the storms with laughter.
Let us raise a shout to pierce the sky—
Like a dungeon-areh bent o'er us ;
Let the full fresh tide of our life gush forth
In a mad and merry chorus,
Till the woods again seem filled with song,
And flowers seem strewed before us.

And round the bright fire for many a night
Let us gather, and charm the time,
Right royally feasting on glorious thoughts
Of sages and bards sublime.
With song, and with story, and high discourse,
The hours will flee lightly away,
And the glad glad light of the cheerful night
Will shine thro' the gloomy day ;
And fresh buds will blow in *our* spring's young glow
'Mid the drooping year's decay !

THE RESURRECTION OF ROME.

AFTER centuries of shame,
Eternal Rome awakes sublime,
And clothes her new-born majesty
With glories of the olden time,
With more than royal attributes
That made her great ere power was crime.

Grandly rise the sovereign people—
On in triumph, on they roll!—
In every noble face transfigured
Ardent shines a hero's soul.—
They stand, they shout, and lo, once more,
The Tribune in the Capitol!—

Romans!—he saith—deeds have ye done
Like those enshrined in records hoary:
To-day our country hath renewed
The greatness of her ancient story—
All grandeurs of her sunsets gather
Into this new dawn of glory.—

Tyrants!—aliens, mitred, sceptred,
Leagued in falsehood, cursed with gore,
Away!—the Heavens are weary of ye,
Earth will bear your crimes no more!
Despite your craft, the world yet moves,
Yea, your own kingdoms are in motion.
Behold, Rome's noble Italy
Is girdled with the Alps and Ocean!

Her sky is starred with splendid names;
Her earth is all heroic dust;

Her proud souls wear like regal robes
The memories of their sires august ;
The spirit of a mighty future
Throbbeth in her very stones :—
Lo, Freedom comes and Victory,
Seated on a pile of thrones !—

Romans, patriots, where we stand,
Equal brothers, brave and leal,
We now deerce the liberty
Of the ancient Commonweal—
And here proclaim by Earth and Heaven,
And by the holy martyr-graves,
That never more shall Roman mothers
Stoop in tears to suckle slaves !—

He ceased mid tumult of acclaims :
Ten thousand voices joyous ring ;
Ten thousand men join heart and hand,
In their freed country glorying ;—
And every citizen of Rome
To-day is greater than a king !

THE GOLD-SEEKERS.

UP ! comrades up, from plough and loom—
Behold the Golden Age is come !
A new-born hope springs like a lark,
And *our* world turns out o' the dark,
Into the dawn of fortune's smile ;
And wealth and glory wait our toil.
A splendid future lies before us,
Ever greatening as we go ;
Kindly the blue heavens bend o'er us ;
Blithe and brisk the breezes blow.
Let us away, O brother-band,
Over the sea to the Golden Land !

Thus One spake to his yoke-fellows,
And they lifted up their eager brows,
Like men just waked to a purpose brave ;
And gaily they sped o'er the ocean-wave,
Speeding the ship with songs of glee,
Loading the winds with jubilee ;
Until, at length, the sails were furled,

And they came to a land like an infant world,
Swathed in silence and slumb'rous light,
And lying calm in ungrown might.

O there was a vision golden !
The sky seemed Fortune's scroll unfolden,
And writ all over with fortunate stars ;
And the sun-rays glowed like golden bars ;
And the rare gold, through the ground it gleamed
And glittered in the streams, and teemed
In thousand places yet unseen ;
And the clink of gold awaked the serene
Old solitude, that seemed forgot
Till now, in its repose remote.
And with one will, one aim, one thought,
Right eagerly the toilers wrought
To gather the shining stores ; and they told
Exulting joy as they grasped the gold :—

Ha ! this is better than to moil and moan,
To suffer and to sweat for bread alone.
Lo, here we stand in unimagined worth,
With skies auspicious crowned, while subject Earth
Spreads at her feet her tribute-treasuries !
Dim fables turn to splendid verities ;

And purple blooms of mellow old tradition
Fade in the fulness of a new fruition ;
And El Dorados of our boyish dreams
Grow poor beside the waking truth that beams
Right in our faces.—O, this is the top
Of all our toil, and harvest of our hope !
We clutch the magic prize which all men seek ;
And we have equal place with those that wreak
The wrongs we late endured.—We're level now
With our old taskmasters ; and with haughty brow
'Tis now our turn to lord it !—Once we wrought,
In darkness and in dearth, and were as naught ;
But now we are grown somewhat, and we blaze
With sudden glory in men's reverent gaze !
Yes, we've been slighted and cuffed aside,
But here are the keys that will open wide
The gates o' the world ; and we'll enter in
Like kings and conquerors ; and we'll win
Regard and homage, hour by hour,
Since wealth is wisdom, and honour, and power !

And still they wrought and wrought ; and still their store
Waxed greater daily, as they gloated o'er
The piled heaps ; and 'mid their growing gains
Huts turned to palaces, and savage plains

Were strewed with shining cities, full of jars ;
And seeds were scattered of swift-coming wars.
At length, these men grew grey, but not with years ;
And some exclaimed, half-choked with sordid fears,
“ We’ll rest, and count our gains.” And so they told
Their treasures o’er ; but there was naught but gold.
Gold they had found in place of life—poor dupes !
Their loftier thoughts, their loves, their holier hopes,
Yea, even their souls were molten down, and fused
Into hard yellow gold ; and thus abused,
They sat in a drear shadow far apart
From life’s true glory ; while a dull dumb smart,
The sense of a huge want, they knew not what,
Consumed them, and their days did slowly rot
Out of their hands, and drop into the earth,
’Mid heaps of splendour turned to dole and dearth.
And the gold-glitter cast a lurid glare
Upon the ending doom and grim despair,
Which darken’d near, and nearer, cold and bare.

WANDERING FANCIES OF A SUMMER DAY.

AFTER long nights of feverous unrest
And days of weary pain, I rose restored ;
And forth I hasted with a hungry heart,
To meet the glowing breeze, and feast again
On the broad blessedness of earth and sky.
It was a morn in August. Even yet,
Tho' budding spring was o'er, and summer's prime,
There was such freshness, such a spirit of youth,
Such newness of delight in everything,
As if the jocund seasons had come back
To pleasure me that morn ; and in my sight,
So long beclouded with the four bare walls,
Such beauty shone beneath, such glory above,
As of a new earth under a new heaven.
Nature held festival to honour me,
And gathered all her charms into one smile
Of gracious welcome ; and to cheer me more,
After my suffering, she also seemed
To revel in the luxury of life
Released from pain : no shadow on her face,

No sorrow in her heart ! It might have been
The birthday of the world, with yet no trace
Of wrong or misery, and no black thoughts
To eclipse the glorious sun. So on I fared
Abandoned to all blessed impulses,
Among all things rejoicing in my joy.
Where'er I turned, some touch of sympathy
My spirit thrilled. The daisy never smiled
In old Dan Chaucer's eyes with more delight
Than now in mine ; and every wayside bloom
Brighten'd at my approach. The grasshopper
Chirrup'd a livelier note. The musing herds
Gazed in my face with happiness sedate.
The very crows among the tall old elms,
About a quaint old hall, wheeled round and round,
Cawing their joy with pleasing dissonance ;
And as I passed a cottage, from the eaves,
A small wren caroll'd blithe, while at the door
An infant in its mother's arms, held out
Its little hands to me, with tiny laugh.
I could discern where all the flowers had been,
And still their sweets remained ; and still for me
All gladsome birds between the swallow of spring
And autumn's redbreast, left their melodies
To gratulate this memorable morn.

Awhile I rested on an upland knoll,
To mark the scene. Around me, and beneath,
Were rich green meadows, sprinkled with still flocks,
Varied by slopes and swells of waving wheat,
Golden for harvest ; and in merry bands
Were sun-burnt reapers scattered here and there
Among the early barley. Mansions white
Gleamed 'mid dark trees, and lowly cottages
Smiled through their woodbines ; and some village spires
In the blue distance joinèd earth to heaven.
And laden wains along the green old lanes
With musical motion winded ; and brisk girls
Tripped lightly over paths from farm to farm ;
And yonder, glorious 'mid grime and smoke,
The giant city sweltered in the sun.

Beauty was everywhere, and pleasure's smile
Common as sunshine ; but my chiefest joy
Was when I reached the shade of an old wood
Skirting a proud old park. It is a place
Of sylvan pleasaunce called the Happy Vale.
In midst thereof a gentle streamlet winds
Adown a stair of falls from rock to rock,
With many murmurs ; and on either side
Stand goodly companies of stalwart elms,

And oaks right royal in the 'state and pride
Of full five hundred summers. 'Neath these trees,
Are nooks of nestling calm and dear delight,
Sweet sanctities of soul's peace and heart's ease,
Cool brooding shades wherein the spirit dwells
Of green Antiquity. When to this spot
I came, the dance and tumult of my joy
In a great Sabbath of still happiness
Subsided soon. For unto him who yields
Allegiance to Nature, there is that
In her wild woodland presence which subdues
The soul with exaltation. It is good
Within the forest-temple to bow down,
While she bestows the grace and benison
Of her most holy peace ; and it is good
To worship in the temple made with hands,
Beneath the Gothic pomp of pictured pane
And blossomed stone, and sacred imageries
Shaped out of pious thought by toiling Faith.
The hallowed quiet of the olden church,
And the dim silence of the solemn grove—
Each has a voice, which to the weary man,
Hot from the streets of turmoil, whispers clear—
Why all this strife and fret ? Then on his brow
Fall cooling thoughts—his worldly cares subside
As bubble breaths in an eternal calm.

I love to wander thro' cathedral aisles,
'Mid their rich glooms and many-coloured lights,
And wilderness of stony foliage.
But more I love the forest sanctitude,
The cloistral shade of immemorial trees.
Their massy trunks are columns of support
Whereon I lean, and draw from mother Earth
Such nurture bounteous that my Tree of Life
Grows firmer rooted than the central oak,
And in its branches, 'mid blue peeps of sky,
Dwell thoughts, like quiring birds, that sing sweet hymns
And take the heavens with music. In the woods,
'Tis there I lay my hand on Nature's heart,
And feel its pulses throbbing thro' mine own.
With joyful awe I pause to contemplate
The silent life, and miracle of growth,
The pillared grandeur of the grey-green trunks,
The wonder of the overarching boughs,
The mystery of the many-voicèd leaves ;
And casting off the coils of worldliness,
I feel the soul within me, and I feel
More near the Soul of All.

While in such mood
Devoutly rapt, a herd of deer swept by ;
And as one stopp'd to drink out of the stream,

My fancy wandered, and forthwith I gazed
On Shakspeare's Arden. Melancholy Jacques,
And the poor stag upon the swift brook's verge ;
The motley fool who moral'd on the time ;
The good Duke, royal 'mid his careless court
“ Under the Greenwood tree.” These I beheld—
And sweet it were, thought I, to live such life,
Or in a nook like this to dwell apart,
And let the world go by. Philosophy
Might meditate upon the passing hours,
Untroubled by men's jars, or Fortune's frown,
Or schemes of sordid thrift. Ah ! could we leap
The limitary fences round our lot,
And gain the liberties of forests old,
Far better were such life, with summer's boons
And winter's buffets, than to moil i' the dark
For bread of bitterness, or to eat toads
At rich men's tables—to do reverence
Where the heart yields no homage, and so pass
In self-contempt to unregarded graves.

But now 'twas mid-day. Thro' the languid hour,
I laid me down beneath a spreading elm.
Pleasant it was in that cool shadiness
To linger, conscious of the noontide heat,

And yet to feel it not ; to mark o'erhead
The sunbeam trickling thro' the depth of leaves,
Kindling their greenness to a thousand dyes
Of ever-changing glory, and to hear
The lulling murmur of the waterfall
Flow thro' the audible stillness. There I lay
Like Idlesse drowsing in the lap of dreams
With happy half-shut eyes. Lo ! all at once,
A little faery barque with magic sails
Glided towards me on the stream beneath ;
And into it I stept, right glad of heart,
And flush'd with new desires. On, gaily on,
It flash'd along then, like an eager thought,
Over the shining water. On and on,
Thro' woodlands wide and depths of country cheer,
Thro' vales of cornfields and white cottages,
And past the hoary hills and merry meads,
Far past the fields of daisies lingering bright,
Like a winged thing it bore me. Now the stream
Glittered into the glory of a lake,
Spotted with sunny islands, and all round
Girdled with grand old forests. Now it winded
'Long twilight avenues of dreaming trees,'
And now thro' caverns full of mingling murmurs ;
And then 'twas lost amid the gentle swell

Of Ocean, lying blessed as a bride,
Smiling to heaven with heaven in its smile.
And still the light barque, like a shape of life,
Or vision of the air, skimm'd o'er the wave
Bearing me on and onward, till at length,
'Twas by a lulling breeze of music borne
Unto a wondrous shore, where golden sands
Gleamed under lustrous shells and pebbly pearls.
It was a land where endless morning slept
On fields of amaranth and asphodel
And ever-blowning roses. Rivers large
Rolled tides of crystal amid woods of palm,

Might wander, singing evermore new songs
Amidst enchantments, thick as flowers in June.
On every side were Gardens of Delight,
Where fountains overwrought with legends old,
For ever played, and sculptured Graces glowed
Thro' mists of bloom and fragrance. Winding paths
Led unto sylvan bowers and Druid groves,
And glorious plots of all the sunny South,
And unto vales where pastoral Quiet lay
Lapt in a vision of the golden age.
Radiant amid this goodly realm appeared
The forms of lovely fables, plain to sense ;
The marvels of old story ; the divine
Creations of high poets. There I saw
White beauties in green glooms, and groups of shapes,
Like animated sculpture ; Bowers of Bliss
Crowded with faces of immortal charm,
And sweet tales eloquent with throbbing life.
Entering that land, in music and in joy,
The waters of rejuvenescence flowed,
From whence a throng of maidens bright emerged,
Fair as a galaxy of new-bathed stars
From ocean's foam ; and in the glowing air
They sang out jubilant, or jocund danced
Over the emerald sward, with flying feet

In winding mazes endless ; or on banks
Of flowers they reclined, wreathing their hair,
Sleeking their rounded charms, and lightly smiling
At thought of distant graves. As on I passed,
I saw where men and maidens lived their life
After the use of mild antiquity,
Before dear love became commodity.
Over the plain, or on the mountain side,
Or in low vale embowered, they hand in hand,
Fleeted the time, and in each other's eyes
Clear stars of honour's constancy beheld.—
Here gentle shepherds, as they watched their flocks,
Made hill and valley vocal with their song ;
And now a merry rout, with vine-leaves wreathed,
Piping and dancing, brought the vintage home.
While nymphs and dryads gleamed among the trees,
And glimpses were half-caught of radiant spells
And lovely mysteries, in circles woven
With limbs entwinèd of bacchantes gay.

Amid this scene, suddenly a fresh breeze
From English cornfields wafted on my cheek.
At once I ope'd mine eyes : the old elm tree
Branched overhead, and underneath, the stream
With many murmurs flowed. All was the same

As when I sailed away an hour ago.
Yet, as I waked, methought I could discern
A new intelligence in Nature's face,
As if I had surprised her unawares
Without the mask, before she could o'erveil
Her more divine regards. But what I saw
I may not speak, unless I could describe
All that the lover sees in the beloved,
And all the endless charms a mother finds
In her babe's face, and all the child beholds
In the large yearning of its mother's eyes.

SHAKSPERE'S BIRTHDAY:

IN THE FUTURE.

THE "dear, dear land" rejoices with proud joy.
Joy thrills the souls, and dances in the veins,
Of noble crowds that boast the lineage
Of England's Shakspere. Cities and fair towns
Are garlanded with flowers and greenery.

The public squares and galleries are strewed
With forms of grace, and breathing majesties
Of thought and passion, which o'ermastering Art
In their supremest moments turned to stone,
Or stamped on canvas. And the eager throngs
Seize wealth of beauty there, and feast their souls
On sculptures moulded in the poet's thought,
And pictures glorious with his fancy's glow.
The throbbing theatres o'erswell with triumph
While later Keans and Kembles grandly come,
Taking all hearts with royalty of power.

It is a bright particular festival ;
And spirits of more than mortal potency
With Earth's own children join in jubilee.—
Fair rainbow fancies girdle the great world ;
And delicate graces float in the still air,
While gusts of song in dreamy murmurs fade.
And human sounds are music ; and men breathe
A finer element, and move in glory !
And now, thus spreading with a choral swell
Of voices glad, the poet's praise is borne :—

O thou, the first among the sons of light,—
Thou who encirclest life in living music,
Full of heart-throbbings, and the electric words
That thrill thro' all the ages—Thou who seest,
As thro' a glass, the secrets of the world,
And the soul's inmost workings : Poet-chief,
Fresh-laurelled heir of ever-growing fame,
Marvel of men, great Representative
Of all Humanity—we consecrate
This day to thec ; and magnify thy name,
Highest of kings, above all crowns and thrones,
Above all poet-palms and dignities !
Our bosoms glow with thee, O Bard beloved !
Our voices lift thy praise, our spirits leap

To thine with pride and lofty sympathy,
Yea, with the pulse of brotherhood, for thou art
Our own dear England's Child ! Thy fame is ours,
Our dearest boast, our richest heritage.
Our life is quickened by thy light ; our thoughts
Grow unto thee, as flowers unto the sun.
Thy glory clothes us like a purple robe,
And we are great thro' thee ; and evermore
This day is thine, and hallowed in our hearts !

OUR POSSESSIONS.

TO JOHN ROEBUCK.

I.

Smooth your brows, good yokefellow ; the clouds go by ;
 the heavens endure !—

Into sunlights bloom the shadows—we are not so *very*
 poor !—

When stern Day, our hard taskmaster, turns, and leaves
 our pain behind,

Night comes like a tender mother, bending o'er us loving
 kind,

With her heaven on heaven she crowns us, plumes our
 feet with peace, to climb

Where, like stars in mighty stillness, earth's Immortals
 reign sublime.

From their heights of fame they stoop, stretch to us
 fraternal hands,

Lift us up to their communion, seat us 'mid their skiey
 bands.

O then are we rich and glorious—brothers of the wise
 and great,

Heirs of all the worlds they conquered—lords of time
and kings of fate !

II.

We've the might of stern old Winter's crown of gloom
and sceptre hoary ;

We've the glow of Spring's young gladness, and the
prime of Autumn's glory.

Then what Summer joy is ours, when upon a welcome
day,

Revelling with June luxurious, forth we hasten far away !
In the blessed Sabbath sunshine, 'mid the deep rich
meadow grass,

The happy herds, in groups of quiet, give us greeting as
we pass.

Among the green old lanes and alleys, bowery nooks and
leafy places,

The birds sing to us blithe, Good-morrow ! and the
flowers laugh in our faces.

A general burst of welcome comes from thousand thousand
gladsome voices.

All Nature, as once more she clasps us, through her
mighty heart rejoices !

Thus we go to our possessions ; power and joy upon us
wait ;

Countless things of bloom and beauty like true vassals
swell our state.

'Mid fair pastures, white with daisies, mixed with flush
of king-cups golden,

Woodlands gay, and green young cornfields, and quaint-
gabled mansions olden,

Pleasant downs, and breezy uplands, proud parks, and
ancestral towers—

Like rich inheritors we go, and look on all, and count
them ours !

III.

Where the gilded great ones lord it, we have all the charm
and worth ;

All, except the trees' mere timber, and the earthiness of
earth.

Bounteous Nature is our own—we possess her wide
domains ;

Ours are all her growing glories, ours are all her richer
gains.

And fair Art, the still enchantress, yearningly doth us
embrace

In her immortalities of breathing grandeur and of grace ;
For us she opes her storied treasures, wins her triumphs,
counts her spoils ;

For us her ministers, high chosen, give their cares and
pains and toils.

We may not own the stone or canvas, but we gain the
shapen thought

Of the picture or the sculpture—we have all the Artist
wrought.

IV.

Amidst a crowd, one holiday, I entered in a mansion
stately

Of a proud Peer, yet good tho' proud, with soul to keep
his greatness greatly.

I wandered thro' his princely halls, strewn thick with
sculptured forms divine,

And marvels wrought with colours, wherethro' spirits of
rare artists shine.

I walked beneath a sky of glass, where in fragrant,
slumbrous calm,

Grew luxuriance of the South—stately pine and plumy
palm,

And olive, date, and fig, and orange with its leaves of
glorious green—

Plants of every form of foliage, flowers of every colour'd
sheen.

Thence, along goodly terraces, and winding noble avenues

Of old patrician trees that led to bursts of park and forest-views ;
And where full many a cool cascade thro' mossy rock and wild grot breaks,
And fountains leap into the sky and fall in rainbows o'er the lakes.
Boundless wealth and lavish art with loveliest nature there combine
To make a scene of brave enchantment—and that day it all was mine !

V

O smooth your brows, dear Friend and comrade ; look around, above, below,—
Wide extend our fair possessions—we are richer than we know !
There is store of wealth exceeding lands and lordships, gems and gold ;
There is value deeper, greater than the worth that may be told.
Look with eyes that let pale truth in, flushing it with splendid story,
As rich-dyed cathedral windows turn the common light to glory !

GILBERT MARLOWE.

PART I.

THE NIGHT.

A Voice of passionate plaint—a mighty Cry,
Wrung from the souls of multitudes untaught,
Arises thus in wail perpetual :—

Wherefore, O wherefore must we bear this curse,
To wander darkling, outside of all good,
Aliens from heaven, and strangers upon earth ?
Why must we stoop our foreheads to the dust
Before the haughty World—the tyrant World,
That heeds not our dumb pain, but turns in scorn,
And bars his gates against us, without ruth ?—
Our days are like a story that is told.
Life hides us from her worth; Fortune slips by,
And turns away her face ; and when, elate,

We would spring forward for her grace and boon,
We are dragged helpless down. We must stand back,
While fortunate men in smiling mastery
Win every prize, and mock our empty hands.
We toil in tears ; we grind our bones for bread,
And perish while we eat. We come and go
As things of small account, and there is left
No trace but nameless graves.
Yet gleams of grandeurs, hidden in our souls,
Sometimes break thro' the darkness. Oft within
We feel the motions of an unborn Might ;
And sometimes thoughts, like angels unawares,
Come all in light and bear us back to God.

Wherefore, O wherefore must we bear this curse ?
Ye nurture flowers and add unto their glory :
Ye culture fruits to richest perfectness :
Why are *we* left to spring up into life
As worthless weeds spring in a ruined palace ?
Why must we pine uncultured, as harsh fruits
Pine in dark forests, and in bitterness
Drop silently, and unregarded rot ?
Ye train right well your horses and your hounds—
Why not train *us* ? O had ye cared to nurse
Our budding powers, so blighted now, what rich

Harvests of blessing our full life had borne !
Had ye but cared for us, as for your hounds,
Your horses, flowers and fruits, what aching cares,
What wretched errors, what self-scourging thoughts,
What sharp experiences, we then had 'scaped !
Help us to live ! O ye with minds more rich
Than treasures of empires--yet to whom
All worlds bear tribute—help us ; plead for us
With flame-tipt tongues and passionate eloquence—
O give us light, that we may live our life !

This Cry outpoureth from ten thousand spirits ;
And all their pains were rankling in the breast
Of Gilbert Marlowe, as he watched alone
With many thoughts, amid the silent night.
Pale by his side, Hope stooped unto the ground ;
While Memory held to him an open scroll
With all his errors writ in fiery flames
That burnt into his heart and blood and brain.
'Twas a sad record ; tragic, yet not strange ;
Since he was burthened with high power untaught ;
Since life thus forward had been mere privation
Of helpful guidance, nurture spiritual.
In childhood's years, he was a thing o'erpassed,
Not worth a care. And his great human soul,

Whether it grew and flowered unto heaven,
Or rotted into earth, without a sign,
'Twas of no moment to the bustling world.
In dangerous youth, as in a helmless ship,
'Mid waters wild and strange, he drifted on
Tow'rsds yawning death, in every wind that blows.
But some stray waifs of knowledge in his breast
A mighty yearning woke, and made him feel
Like those old voyagers on seas unknown,
When wandering birds and floating forest-boughs
Brought tidings of new worlds, with shores outspread
Of golden sands and regions fortunate
And El Dorados glorious without end.
He touched those happy shores, but found no home.
On perilous roads, in wildering mazes lost,
Chasing mere shadows, cheated by vain hopes;
He wandered—guided by no hand of help,
No voice of counsel; and from youth misused
To sudden manhood unawares he came.
But still youth's dreams befooled him; and withal
Sin nestled in his heart; and clods of earth
Grew round his soul; and darkness blotted heaven.
He dreamed, and sinned, and life slipped 'neath his feet,
Till now he wildly waked.
And 'twas a pang more bitter than remorse

To count the barren years, and feel the smart
Of all he *might* have been ;—to feel his heart
Bursting with great dumb yearnings, mighty thoughts,
Unspoken, stifled ; and the spirit's fire,
That should have blazed like sunrise o'er the world,
Now like a lamp within a sepulchre,
Burning to sullen waste.

This misery bowed his head upon his breast ;
It weighed him down, like withering old age
On young years fallen with strange calamity.
His life all seemed a desert-dreariness—
A level waste beneath a leaden sky ;
And his fair title to the fields of light,
And heights of power, and proud prerogatives
Of spirits endowed with nature's opulence
Of glorious faculty—that title, sealed
By God's own hand, was like a folded scroll
Burnt up by irremediable wrong.
And he felt nothing but an aching sense
Of huge privation, which so wrought on him
That no addition of extreme pain, loss,
It seemed could touch him more. The world was void,
And life and time were empty. Like a stain
On night's pure darkness, a black shadow spread :

Thercin he mourned, and nursed his discontent ;
And scourged his spirit with self-torturing thoughts ;
And magnified the evil and the woe
Within him, and without ; in mood perverse,
Adding worse features to ill-favoured things,
Till all was grim distortion, glooming stern.
Upon the past he looked with pale dismay ;
Then crimson shame rushed burning thro' his veins,
And smote his heart for many an error sad.
Fair lost occasions stung him with keen taunts
Of guerdons still ungained ; thick-crowding hopes
That seemed as flush as flowers, now bare as stones,
Fell heavy and dead ; and he was left alone,
All, all alone—abandoned to the strife
Of the soul's anarchy and tempests raging.

At length, his weak and passion-beaten breast
Swelled overcharged ; when looking up, he saw
The still broad Night, with all her starry eyes,
Regarding him with pity, or perchance
With infinite surprise ; and as he looked,
The inward tumult, by that mighty calm,
And the benignant aspects of the stars,
Was soothed to milder mood. Still, as he gazed,
Came softer thoughts, less selfish, tho' yet sad,—

Thoughts, ranging 'mid the shining infinite ;
Then by necessity of sympathy,
Lone brooding o'er the night-side of this world—
O'er wrongs concealed—the dumb, dread tragedy,
The deeper darkness folded in the gloom.
So the dead pressure of his personal pain
Awhile grew lighter, o'er wide space diffused,
With contemplation of the grief beneath,
And all the glory above. And thus in front
Of the heavenly hosts, he pondered long :—

How calm,

How awful calm, they shine—unmoved, untouched,
Amid the tempests of poor human thought !
There they have watched this weary earth grow old,
And still they beam as fair as at the first,
In all their radiant youth ! Still they keep watch
O'er the great march of life, and time, and change,
And even o'er *me* they bend ! Alas, alas !
Meek, silent witnesses of sin and shame,
How much do they endure to look upon !
Now in the byeways of the lonely night,
Love wanders with her one child, Misery,
And cannot see the heavens thro' her tears.
Moaning, she wanders with slow fainting steps,
And bends her dying eyes upon the ground

To find a welcome grave,
Now passion revels ; and hot lusts leap forth
Like unleashed hounds, with all hell at their heels,
Chasing them thro' this shadow of the world
To shades far deeper.

Riot holds festival in gay saloons,
Ablaze with light, and clouded with perfumes,
Dazzled with serpent-charms and painted smiles,
Ghastly as sunshine in a charnel-place.

But vulgar Vice and hungry Wretchedness
Sink in their stifling dens or roofless courts,
Hid from men's eyes, where only a few stars
Shine unregarded thro' the rents of night.

There human things are writhing in the dark
Like trampled worms, or heaps of outcast souls
In pits of reeking torment. There they lie—
Mere clotted heaps of festering misery.

They curse the night, and they will curse the morn :
They curse all things ; for their humanity
Is bruted, blasted by a fearful curse.

On distant battle-fields, the watch-fires gleam
Till the first peep of day ; when swift upstarting,
Two clouds of life will meet and melt away
In a red rain of death. Curses and yells,

Groans, shrieks, and shouts, and blare of clarions,
Cleaving the smoke of rolling thunderbolts,
Will hail the smiling morn. No hope for Mercy !
She shrinks in horror, blinded by the flash
Of the sword's lightning, and her pleading voice
Is drowned amid the thunder of the cannon,
And roar and clash and tramp of storms of men,
With foaming lips, and hell-fire in their eyes—
A maddened ocean rolling—wave on wave,
Bruising the earth, and battering the high heaven,
Till Ruin cry, *Enough !* and Desolation,
With glutted maw, lie silent as the grave.
Ah ! 'tis a dreadful horror wild. And yet
There's worse destruction nestling in the heart
Of this most peaceful city, even now,
While comfortable men sleep in their beds,
And dream that all is well. The demon War,
Rushing upon the whirlwind of his wrath,
With bolts of ruin flashing from his hands,
And all the dogs of carnage at his heels,
Stamping proud cities into dust and ashes,
And o'er a thousand battle-fields exulting
'Mong heaps of trampled slain, in mire of blood—
Yes, he is cruel, but less terrible
Than the unnamed Perdition which devours

So many round me, this fair quiet night,
While all goes well with the unheeding world !

I hear light footsteps in the silent street,
And forced gay talk, and hollow laughter,
That sounds more sad than wailing.—'Tis a band
Of outcast women wandering forlorn,
Poor fallen sisters ! on their midnight rounds,
Outside the doors of comfort, still they roam,
Bearing the burden of a misery
Too fearful to be named. Alas, alas !
Those fairest flowers of earth, like foulest weeds,
Trampled and spurned beneath the feet of men—
That bright divinity of womanhood
Profaned, abased, in wreck unspeakable,
Which the soul aches to contemplate ! No curse
Of war, or plague, or famine, could compare
With that pale Misery *laughing* in the street.

One of the wretched sisterhood to-night
Hath made her bed within the dreary river.
She is before me now.—I see her face
That once was sweet, and still is beautiful—
I see her streaming hair, her frenzied eyes
Upturned in desperate appeal to heaven ;

And her last look pierces me like a knife—
'Tis turned in keenest agony of reproach
On me, on all the world, that left for her
No rest, no shelter, but this dark cold death.

Methinks I know the story of her life :
Some years of maiden whiteness, bloomed with hope,
Till blighting shaine came on her unawares,
Constrained by hunger, or by love beguiled.
Then was no kindly help, no refuge near—
Naught but worse evil, and cold loveless looks
That beat her down like blows. So lower, and lower,
She sank in sin and shame, and constantly
Thro' the streets wander'd, homeless as the wind
That goeth meaning over dreary moors
Thro' dark November nights. And still she sank
Lower and lower, till at length o'erwrought
By one wild pang of memory and despair,
With madness in her brain, she rushed to death
To hide from loathsome life.

O, I am sad to look on ye, you heavens,
And think of all the strange sights ye behold
Where we inhabit ! And are *ye* not sad
To look on this poor world, that blindly spins

Among your splendours, as if all that dome
Were but a tinsel theatre, lit up
For its dark tragic shows? Ay, ye kind heavens,
Do ye not grieve to gaze on such a world?
Is't fit with all your stars ye watch our ways,
And o'er us bend so loving-tenderly,
While from your light we turn, to play our pranks
Heedless and darkling? What have we to do
With your exceeding glory, without stain?
Methinks 'twere well had such as I no place
Amid your glimpses. O regard us not,—
For ye are mighty—ye are pure and grand
Beyond our thought; and we are mean and base,
Unworthy your beholding.

Thus he complained unto the listening stars;
And stung by thoughts more keenly personal,
He yet broke forth anew:—

Ay, there ye shinc,
Beyond the touch of passion or remorse.
Ye have no feeling for me—ye are cold—
Yea, cold as Destiny, that with the stare
Of awful eyes, filmed o'er with mysteries
Of dim eternities, sits stony calm,
Unmoved by mortal breath, or tears, or prayers.

Would I could hide my weakness from your strength,
So ye no more might mock or pity me
With that untroubled gaze, so coldly bright !
Oh, if my griefs were noble, if my soul
Approved the cause, then I could smile at Fate,
And front ye all serenely ! Then, methinks,
I could stand forth in dauntless fortitude,
And all the frowns and terrors of this world—
All adverse things should press on me as light
As morning mists upon a mountain's brow !

For there is blessedness in noble grief :
It is right royal to be crowned with thorn.
The Titan, with the vulture at his breast,
Exults o'er conquering Jove.
The martyrs in triumphant agony
Are glorified for ever. I behold them—
Their eyes of patient suffering, and their brows
Beaded with bloody sweat, yet very calm.
In sevenfold bondage, where one line of light
Pierces the dungeon-grate and cleaves the gloom ;
Upon the rack, in fiercest torture lapt,
Their lips comprest by pangs of fortitude ;
'Midst curses nailed unto the tree of shame ;
Beaten with cruel rods, or bruised with stones,

Or clothed in flames of fire :—I see them all—
The Noble Army ! Silently they march
In the world's shadow, while the nations sleep.
They gird their spirits' loins, and speed right on—
They trample fear and darkness 'neath their feet—
They grapple with grim Death, and, overthrown
In worst defeat, they're more than conquerors.
Right on, they climb the uttermost ascent
Of mortal pain ; and lo, upon the top
They are transfigured in celestial splendour !

So they are blessed, and for ever blest :
They won the crown when they had borne the cross,
And their extremest pang was lighter far
Than this which now I feel.
Why, Martyrdom were easy—'twere light labour
For noble ends to leap into the Pit,
And beard the very fiends ! But who can live
To suffer and to shrink—to creep in fear
'Twixt dim to-morrows and dark yesterdays—
To fight with shadows, grapple with the clouds,
And fall with nothing won ? So round and round,
Dwell in the circle of one dreariness
Of empty days, with darkness at the close ?
What tho' I know the chosen ones sublime

Have risen like stars upon the skies of fame,
And that I, too, should wrestle with the world,
And throw it from my path, and mount those heights
Where they abide above the smoke and noise !
What tho' I feel an eager soaring spirit
Pining within me, preying on itself,
Crushed down to languish, like a prisoned eagle
Chafing his wings against the iron bars,
And with blind impulse feeling tow'r'd the sun !
Or what avails it that in Fortune's spite,
Nature endowed me with rich elements,
And strength to suffer, and to perish not—
Since I have grown beneath the heaven's reproach,
Robbed of my youth, of manhood's hope despoiled,
Till now I feel the wrinkles in my soul,
While yet my brow is smooth ! O would the accurst
Invisible power, that eats away my life,
Take shape, approach me, tho' with all the terrors
Of men and demons fell, that front to front
I might oppose it bold, and trample it down,
Or be myself o'erwhelmed—and there an end !

Thus having fumed, and wailed, he calmer grew ;
His violent woe subsiding like a storm
That had outwept its rain. Then, audible,
In the deep stillness woke this calm reproof—

Behold Queen Night, be-diademed with worlds,
And robed in silence ! Is't a mournful sight ?
Or is it well thy feeble woe to thrust
Into this awful presence ?
O puling child of man, take hope, take heart !
Complaints are vain, but Will is destiny ;
And faith is mighty in the mightiest.
If thou hadst faith in God, and in thyself,
And a brave will to struggle, and ne'er yield—
Then might'st thou conquer all things ; or at worst
Thou should'st endure, endure, and still endure,
With spirit strong as Patience, calm as Strength—
Waste not repentance in most vain remorse,
Nor sigh and whimper like the fool of fate,
Bowing in every wind ; but be a man,
Erected in thy manhood like a tower,
That braves the onset of all storms that blow.
There, where thou standest, throw off the dead past.
Life is before thee—Heaven is yet to come !

Again broke out his sorrow, and he plained :—

Ah ! if 'twere so, then 'twould be well indeed.
Oh, I could bear the inflictions of worst doom—
I could walk thro' the furnace and the flame—
Methinks in thought I could endure all hell

To win far less than Heaven ! But I fear
That fair immortal heritage is lost.
That glory, of more worth than all the worlds,
Like other dreams doth pass. Bright faith departs—
I linger by its fading gleam, like one
Beside a dying watch-fire, chill at heart
Amid the hungry Night, that grows and greatens,
And presses round him with forebodings vast
Of coming woe, in thousand shapes unknown.

At length, enfevered sleep his murmurs hushed,
And a brief space the world's oppressions all
Upon his folded eyelids lightly lay.

GILBERT MARLOWE.

PART II.

THE MORROW.

Next morning 'twas the Sabbath. Gilbert rose,
And a strong impulse urged him to go forth.
'Twas in the prime of autumn. The brown Earth,
After the heats of harvest, lay at rest,
Amidst her stores, in measureless content.
How quietly she lay in that still noon
And sleeping sunshine, looking up to heaven,
With happy smile, and dumb with thankfulness !
How tenderly on Gilbert, too, she smiled,
Like a kind mother on an erring child
Returning for her blessing ! On he went.
Before him far, a line of ancient hills,
Rugged and bold, stood out against the sky,
And grand old woods, in many-coloured robes

Right royally stood round, and stretched away
In darkening masses, kindling into bursts
Of golden splendour thro' their purple shade.

O ever welcome are the grand old woods,
Fresh in young April, quick with shooting green ;
Or rich in June, with luxury of leaves :
Right lovely are they in their growing pride,
But lovelier in their glory of decay.
Right joyous are they when the happy birds
Salute the morn with thousand-throated songs,
Or pour soft vespers to the setting sun,
Singing the summer day to balmy rest.
Or when alone the cuckoo's monotone
Lulls drowsy noon ; or when sweet philomel
Trills passionate music to the listening night,
And wakes the dreaming rose-buds with her song.

O fair and joyous are the woods in summer !—
But when the birds are still, and faded leaves
Fall in the silence silently and slow,
Then their solemnities have deeper joy,
Tho' less of rapture. And it is the prime
Of the year's growth and prodigality,
Of ever-new delights, to linger long

When Queenly Autumn, laden with the wealth
Of all the seasons, passes in her pomp.

Somewhat of this proved Gilbert, as he walked.
The calmness of the meditative skies
Brooded most soothingly upon his soul;
The silent mountains in their grand repose,
The sylvan solitudes, the ancient trees
Standing so stately with no sound or stir—
Spread over him a mighty peacefulness
Of tender-shaded thought. Great Nature's self
Poured on his head her choicest influences.
She smoothed his brows, anointed his dim eyes,
So that he saw the wonder of her face,
And all its sweetness and its sacred charm.
Then his poor griefs, retiring, veiled their eyes,
Ashamed to stand before her; while her stillness
Spoke clear unto his heart—Why shouldst thou mourn?
The heavens bend low to comfort the old Earth,
And thee to comfort also!—Thus assured,
A quiet feeling, growing tow'rds content,
Stole in his spirit, and forth on he trod
With pensive steps along the woodland ways.

Full in his path, a ruined castle hoary
Stood mouldering in state—a lordly power

That stooped to Time its battlemented pride,
But from its conqueror new honours gained—
A mantling beauty and a crowning grace.

There lingered he, like pilgrim at a shrine.
For all the reliques of the crumbling Past
Were unto him religion. Mid the ruins
Of towers and fallen temples, he would stand
With shaded face, as in a mighty presence.
Or he would sit in twilight of dim thought
Among the broken walls, and fill the haunt
With all the life of vanished centuries,
And crowding fantasies of his own brain.

'Tis good in silence of these Autumn hours
To muse on the great past. For when, as now,
Old Earth is listening with a solemn hush
For the light footsteps of departed days,
When dreamily o'er buried Spring she broods,
And feeds on happy thoughts of Summer's bloom,
Then unto thee the time is consecrate,
O Memory, rich with sunsets !

And Gilbert, lingering in the ruined castle,
Was over-filled with meditations mild

On things that were, but are not. Eloquent
With mortal fate, a breathing charm lay o'er
The turrets fallen, and the desert-halls,
And level floors of swarded silentness.
And the old woods with fading pageantries—
All Nature, veiling her immortal youth
With fleeting pomp and symbols of decay,
Told how the fashion of this world doth pass—
How like the leaves, men vanish from their place,
And drop into their graves, when no wind stirs.
The old, old truth ! With new-subduing might
It moved him overmuch, and thrilled his soul
As with a voice of soundless awfulness,
As with remembered tones of buried love,
Waking rich feelings that had slumbered long.
Musing on forms that peopled these grey halls,
Then passed like shadows to their place beneath ;
And on the common doom which draws the living
To all the mighty kindreds of the dead—
He felt most deeply human—not deprest
With mourning o'er inevitable fate,
But by a gentle melancholy touch'd,
That nourished kind affections, and unsealed
The fountains of unspoken tenderness
Deep in the heart's recesses. Then perforce

Thoughts of mortality woke memories
Of forms familiar vanished from his sight :
And there was one, so loving, so beloved !
His sweet, sweet sister, in her early grave :
He needs must think of her, when flowers and leaves
Are fading o'er the scenes she loved so once.

She drooped in autumn, with the drooping flowers.
Her face became so fair, so passing fair,
That all who saw her grieved ; and day by day
She wasted, pining like the ghost of youth
O'er the sad urn of hope. Some weary weeks
Pale pain crept slowly thro' her delicate veins,
Freezing life's currents. Then the hectic fire
Burned crimson in her cheek, and that strange light
Which flatters hope in mockery, came and went
With startling beauty in her soft sweet eyes.
She knew she never would behold the spring,
Yet she complained not ; and it was most hard
That one so good and gentle should so soon
Fade from the bright world—yet she murmured not ;
But suffered in meek patience till the end.
Then shrouded in white sanctity she lay,
Her eyelids closed, her hands crossed on her breast,
So like a holy saint in dreams of heaven,

That whosoever looked upon her face,
Should never more fear death. So sweet, so fair,
So lovely calm, as if she knew God's peace
And was content beyond desire or thought.
Thus was she borne, and laid in the cold earth.
But thenceforth he beheld her, ever young,
And ever fair, and good ; and in his mind
She grew more lovely, with a dearer grace
Than when she lived—more blest, more beautiful,
More perfect always. And 'tis ever thus.
The charms which life concealed, kind Death reveals ;
And all the priceless worth of those we love
We know not till they've left us. Then we sit
In the great silence of their vacant place,
And sum up their perfections. Then we feel
How close we are upon the other world.
For in the watches of the night, they come
Gently as holy thoughts, and o'er us bend
With an immortal yearning ; and while yet
With dumb beseeching looks, to them we turn,
Leaving a trail of light, they glide away,
And still our arms are empty. But from thence
They are our hope, our refuge, our defence,—
They guard our wandering steps in darksome ways
And watch and guide us, as the kind stars watch
Night-wandering Earth, and lead her to the morn.

His sister's memory in Gilbert's soul
Held a pure place for aye. Oh, 'twas not strange
That men heroic in the ages old
Went to their graves, and grew up into gods,
Since in this later time, one gentlest girl
Died like a flower of summer, and became
A spirit of love, a seraph-minister,
Yea, even a saviour blest. And such was she :—
A gracious presencee, sacred from the world—
A shape of light that hung about his steps
And saved him from perdition, deep as hell.
Oft in the night-time of his lonely pain,
She grew o'er him, like moonrise o'er the dark ;
Oft 'mid the tempests of his heart and brain,
She soothed him with still thoughts, or when he lay
Bare to the naked heavens, her gentle grace
Fell on his sin-scarred spirit, soft as snows
Fall on the bruised and blackened wintry earth,
O'erspreading it with silence and white peace.
But ne'er as now had her pure ministry
So soothed, so softened, so subdued him quite,
So won his spirit from its evil use,
And left it on the angel-side of life,
Bowed with exceeding tenderness and love,

'Tis good beneath this sympathetic sky

To linger with the memories of the dead ;
Not like pale Sorrow in a wilderness
Of withered leaves, thro' mist of blinding tears,
Looking for vanished faces ; but like Faith
Clear-eyed and calm, who trusteth her beloved
At God's right hand—who reacheth thro' the dark
To pluck the rose of sunrise—who discerns
The glories hid behind the loftiest heights,
And gems at bottom of the dreariest deeps.

Oh, how he longed for that calm, clear-eyed Faith
To lead him to her heaven, where in midst
Of the white circles of regenerate souls
He might behold his sister on him smile
Serene assurance of his own great joy,
When freed by Death, and cleansed from mortal stain.
For what availeth Love uncrowned by Faith ?
What if this boundlessness of lavish life,
Swelling in fine affections, be dispersed
Like bubbles into air, and leave no trace ?
What if the ocean of the mighty heart
Must heave, wild, wasteful, under sun and moon
And all the stars, and beat upon no shore ?
Or if the soul, with its aspiring thoughts
That roam the realms of morning, and o'erspread

The brooding twilight, mingling earth and heaven,
Must drop to darkness without hope of day ?

Faith come quickly to thy sister, Love !
Weary and sad, she wanders to and fro,
Bewildered in the dark, with many fears :
She calls to thee.—she stretches forth her hands,
And strains her heart, which swells as it would burst :
O come to her that she may lean on thee,
And go rejoicing on her forward way.

So Gilbert fervent prayed—and faith *will* come,
For even now, in this still sanctity
Of Nature's presence—in this Sabbath-day
Of serene Autumn, Sabbath of the year—
But more, in this great Sabbath of his soul,
When all thoughts, feelings, are dissolved in love,
And soft as wax to take the seal of God—
'Tis the auspicious season, and the hour
For a life's consecration. Even now
The preparation of the blessing comes
In peace that may be felt. Long had he walked
Through mists of wildering doubt, when heaven was hid
And all things earthly were distortions strange ;
And naught was firm and certain. He had borne

Doubts, as of mountains piled upon the brain,—
Doubts, of worse agony than rends the heart
Of lonely voyagers in nights of storm,
When shifting beacon-lights, and sea, and sky,
Are whirled together, and the ghastly waves
Yawn thro' the blackness like the mouth of hell
For spirits doomed and lost. But these were o'er.
And oh, how holy from those perils past,
This peace which now possessed him ! Happy portents
Of coming faith, like angel-presences,
Shone round about, and kindled aspirations
Budding with wings for immortality.
And unseen hands, in loving benison,
Seemed spread above him ; and almost he heard
A voice of heavenly promise, passing sweet.
And he went onward, like one led by signs
And favouring stars to meet a joy unknown.

A band of village children, hand in hand,
Came speeding lightly on the way he walked.
Gladdening the sunshine, gleaming in the shade,
Hither and thither, backwards, forwards, swaying,
Graceful as wild-flowers with light breezes playing—
They came in all their innocent glee—a sight
To charm grey autumn with a dream of spring.

And as they wandered, flowed their happy thoughts
In streams of rippling smiles, with bubble-bursts
Of tiny laughter, into the still air.

Lightly they tripped among the withered leaves—
They knew not of decay—new-crowned Immortals,
With all God's benedictions on their heads,
And round them Eden, guarded from the world
By flaming swords, which men may never pass.
He looked on them, and linger'd, and still looked,
And gazing still, he blessed them from his heart.
Ah ! Childhood only is the absolute lord,
And men are vassals weak. Those little ones
Were heirs of heaven supreme. No doubts, no fears,
Beclouded their young souls ; but blithe and free,
With fresh pure hearts and smiling confidence
They came, and owned whatever they beheld,
And trusted all they saw not. The new grace,
The unworn beauty of all things, were theirs.
And there they went along their separate path
Which *he* must never tread.—Oh it is good
To have been once a child ; when all things fair
Were round about, and God was over-head,
'Mid throngs of radiant angels, even there,
Above the bending blue. And it is good
Still to have Childhood's reverence and truth,

When with the certain, disenchanting years,
The heavens go farther off; and then the stars,
That were but gems to decorate the night—
The kind familiar stars that were so near—
Retire to awful distance, cold and dim.
And Gilbert prayed that he might be in heart
E'en like those little ones, with simple trust,
With soul wide open to all influxes
Direct from Nature's self, and God's own spirit.
He prayed to have that fortunate faculty
Which gildeth common things with light divine,
As sunset turns the leaden clouds to gold;
That pure large faith, as liberal as the air,
That fills all spaces between us and heaven,
And still sustains the world.

Now with slow steps
Contemplative, a mountain's brow he climbed,
And looked far round him, where amidst the deep,
Great Sabbath quietness, in breadths of shade
And still benignities of sunlight, lay
White scattered cottages and red-ploughed fields,
Brown solitary wolds, fair pastures green,
And winding waters gleaming 'mong the trees,
And spires of distant towns, and far away
A belt of grey hills and dark purple woods.

Beneath him, spread the many-coloured floor,
Mosaic, and o'er him, the cloud-fretted dome
Of God's own temple. On this altar-peak,
With his great yearnings, his diviner thoughts,
Accordant with the mingling harmonies
Of Nature's silent hymns and unvoiced prayers—
He was constrained to worship—even thus :—

Great God ! I look on Thy eternal heavens,
And on Thy glorious earth ; and I am sad
To feel Thy presence, yet to know Thee not.
Shall I not know Thee, rise to Thee ? O Thou
Who in all livest and o'er all dost reign,
O Thou who art whate'er I cannot speak
Of good and beautiful—Thou who art Love,—
And may I name Thee Father?—wilt Thou not
Stoop to Thy Child, and scatter his weak fears,
And clear his darkness, fold him in Thy light ?
My heart yearns to Thee—I would clasp Thy feet—
I would cling to Thee, as a drowning man
Clings to the hand of help.—I would fall down
Before Thy face, and lose myself in Thee,
Even as now my troubled breath is lost
In this still general air. Alas ! how great
Hath been my peril, hidden from Thy grace !

Thou know'st the errors of my days—Thou knowest
All the extenuations of my fate—
How in the garden of this world I sprang
Like a wild weed, to grow without regard,
Or to be rooted up, or trodden down.
In younger years, I looked, and in Thy place
Beheld a phantasm of pale Mystery
Enthroned o'er all things. Stonily she sat
With eyes turned inward, thoughtful lips comprest,
And brows of brooding shadow. In her hands
She held a seal'd urn, a folded scroll.
I came with questionings importunate,
And sought in agony of earnestness
To wring her secret—but in vain, in vain :
She answered not, nor heeded my unrest.
Then in the darkness did I wander wide—
Heaven was but vapour, earth but shifting sand,
Yea, all the vital universal frame,
A lovely loathly corse, alive with worms.—
Ah ! what a weary misery was there !
Not all the griefs and heart-aches of this world,
Mingled in one great agony, could match
A doom so utter dark. But, O my God,
I bless Thy guiding mercy that thus far
I have ascended by slow steps of pain,

Out of the shadow of that black despair.
O may I rise yet higher and still higher,
Till all misgivings pale, and lingering doubts
Fade brightly in assurance absolute
Of immortality, and heaven, and Thee !
May I mount upward, tho' with many tears
And much exceeding travail, till at length
The steep Ascent of Purification gained,
Rejoicing in Thy glory I may stand
With all eternity about my brows !
Joy, joy beyond all thought ! It must be so—
I live by faith, altho' I know it not.
For if this boundless feeling in my breast,
Which like a mighty sea would deluge heaven,
And swell thro' all the eternal infinite—
If this were walled and narrowed in by time,
It must o'erwhelm me quite. Yet here I stand,
And lift my forehead, in the pure serene.
I feel Thee at my heart, and in my soul.
Thou touchest the hard rock of centred self,
And 'tis dissolved in fountains of live waters
That over all things flow. Thou raisest me
Above the common cares of common days,
And I will trust the present blessedness,
And all the grandest possibilities

Of the eternal future,—Thee beseeching
That in my spirit may Thy kingdom come !

As if a load were lifted from his life,
He now arose. He breathed with large relief ;
And Nature seemed more fair than she was wont,
And Earth seemed nearer Heaven. In soul composed,
Leaving the lonely mountain-top, he sought
The neighbour-village, with its human homes.
Sweet day of hallowed calm ! sweet tranquil scene !
The very houses stood in Sabbath rest,
And in their midst, the venerable church,
Clothed in its grey antiquity of peace :
A simple pile, sublime in humbleness,
Hallowed by prayers of generations gone—
Dear home of Faith, from age to age preserved,
From sire to son bequeathed ! Its aspect hoar
Constrained from Gilbert reverent regard.
And by the lowly porch he entered in,
Joining the worshippers, who sat devout,
A goodly concourse pleasant to behold :—
The reverend grandsires, stooping their grey hairs ;
Young men sedate, and tender maids demure
With drooping eye-lids, and sweet little ones
Smiling in silence while their parents prayed :

'Twas fair to see that goodly company !
In the low-voiced confession of their sins,
Their penitence professed, and prayers for pardon,
He also joined, with meek submission due.
But 'midst the chanting of the Litany,
A strange affection moved him ; and when rose
The solemn psalm, that feeling was too deep—
He bowed his head and wept.

Oft had he lingered while the choral swell
Of voices sweet, and organ's pomp of praise
Thro' grand old temples rolled, like pageants proud
Thro' cities full of triumph ; and some moments
He soared aloft with those high harmonies
That seemed to take the heavens, and roll thro'
The everlasting gates, and fade away
'Mid hallelujahs of the seraph-choirs.
But not by anthem, with all stately sounds
Pealing in glory 'long cathedral-aisles,
And proudly lingering in the fretted roof
With echoes from the very bourn of heaven,
Was he so moved as by the simple psalm
In this old village church. For lowly sweet,
Sinking with human weakness, humbly rising
With faith divine, yet trembling, 'twas the voice

Of his dumb feeling which could take no shape
But inarticulate music. And withal
It was a spell that waken'd blessed hopes
Shaded with brooding memories, all mingling
In swelling joy to soberness subdued—
Glee touched with tender gloom—a sad delight,
Yet most delightful sadness.

The singing ceased. The good old minister
Stood forth, in eloquence of simple truth,
As a kind father midst his children stands,
And speaks from his heart's fulness. Earnestly
He bade the husbandman prepare for harvest
Of the eternity now sown in time :
He urged the proud man to abase his pride,
Nor deem himself aught greater than the least
Of all his brethren ; and the humble ones—
The poor, the afflicted, and the weary-laden,
He comforted with kindness, words of pity,
That on their drooping spirits fell as sweet
As falls the gentle rain on fainting flowers.

“Thou, too, pale sufferer,” spake the good old man,
Aiming a gentle shaft which Gilbert caught ;
“Thou who wert tossed in anarchy of doubt,
Yet ’mid the tempest didst not shake the reed

Whereon they weakest brother leaned in faith—
Thou also take good comfort, with great hope !
For thee Christ suffered on the bitter cross ;
And all the noble host of martyrs died
To conquer Heaven for thee ! O'er thee now bend
The spirits of the just, who wear serene
Their crowns of light and shining sovereignties
In realms of endless morning. O'er us all
Bends Love Divine, with yearnings infinite,
To bless us evermore. Oh, let us now
Turn from the evil path, to seek out God ;
Let us so walk in reverence and truth
That we may enter thro' Death's gloomy porch
To endless life, and joy unspeakable,
In the fair mansions of our Father's House !”

Now richly blessed, the congregation rose,
And parted slowly to their several homes ;
And Gilbert also took his homeward way.
Filled with high purpose to redeem the waste
Of vanished years, and build his future days
In reverent duty as a pillar erect,—
With great and tranquil thoughts, he took his way :
Life was before him, Heaven was yet to come.

THE MALCONTENT TO HIS FRIEND.

'TWERE something wondrous if the happy theme,
 Ancient as life and truth and poetry,
 After all bards have sang it, should at last
 By me be sounded. But poor instruments,
 Touch'd by a master's hand, will give some tones
 Of unaccustom'd sweetness, and even I,
 Albeit unworthy, by great Love attuned,
 May of its power discourse.

There have been men

Who dwelt amid the shadows of outworn
 Or unformed being, till inspired by Love—
 And then the scatter'd chaos of their lives
 Took shape, and rounded into worlds of light
 That went rejoicing thro' the infinite deeps.
 And I can tell of one whom Love redeemed
 From a perdition dread. He was but young,
 Yet life was sad as sunshine to the blind.
 There was in him a void, a vacant shrine
 Fit for bright angels, but since none possessed it,
 Foul things of darkness came, and blurred its beauty.

The morning faith of ardent youth went down,
And left him groping amid twilight doubts
Unto a midnight of despair. His thoughts
Like famished vultures ate into his heart,
And darken'd o'er his days with evil omens.
Around, life's glory was but dust and ashes ;
Above, the heavens were marble ; and beneath,
The grave-yard earth was glass, wherethro' he saw
Decay's drear mystery as the end of all.

But Love dawned on the darkness, and these fears,
Phantoms, and terrors, faded like foul vapours ;
And Life was lovely then, and Heaven benign,
And all things wore the smile of one sweet maiden.
O she was fair to him as morning light
Unto the night-mared dreamer. She came lightly
Like Spring with blowing buds and breezy motions
And bursts of song and sunshine, and his heart
Put forth new hopes and joys, as a bare tree,
Feeling the vernal season, laughs i' the sun,
And puts forth leaves, and shelters happy birds.

But thou discernest 'tis my own poor self
Whom Love hath so translated. O dear friend,
The weary past is dead—great joy is mine.

A happy chance hath wrought a blessed change
In me and everything. The shadow is swept
From the world's face, and from my human heart.
The old unrest and bitterness are gone,
And I am folded in supreme content,
Whose very depth is passion. Heretofore
My life was one great want, but now I've found
That which I sought, yet knew not that I sought,
Even the love of this most peerless maid.
She was the goal of my unfilled desires ;
And now I know my former bitterness
Was but the aching of the o'erfraught heart,
And love's blind yearning for its loving mate.

When sad and lonely as a starless night,
I bowed in silence, brooding o'er great wrongs
And griefs and secret sins, thou like a star
First beamed upon my path ; but she in peace
Grew o'er me like the moon, and overflowed
My depths of darkness with her holy light,
And made me glorious with transfiguring smiles.

O very fair and lovely is my love,
Tho' 'tis a creature easily pass'd by
In the unobserving crowd ; for she presents

No sacred charm to unanointed eyes.
It is the beauty of the soul that shines
In the perfections of her form and face.
Her beautiful nature every day unfolds
In newer charms and features of delight,
So that each look hath radiance of its own,
And every motion hath peculiar grace.
All lovely thoughts are native unto her,
As flowers to summer; and her presence bright
Is as a blessed sunshine in my path,
And constant benediction. She translates
All my life's grossness and dull work-day cares
To noble purposes, and makes the sphere
Of common duties a great sanctitude
Where nothing mean can enter. Yet, and yet,
With all her gifts and goodness, my sweet love
Is not an angel, but a very woman,
And 'tis her highest glory. She's so rich
In woman's grace supreme, affections pure,
And in her gentleness so absolute,
That none could choose but do her reverence.

When first I met her, suddenly I felt
Blithe as a captive, from the dungeon's gloom
Brought to free air and sunlight. Forth she came

Like a new revelation of God's love
To win an erring spirit unto heaven.
I marked the softness of her yearning eyes,
And her cheek's tender bloom, and her white breast,
Until delight was saddened with the thought
Of my unworthiness. She was so good,
So far beyond me, that I dared not love,
Tho' I could worship her. Oh, but her smile
Enriched my poor desert, and made me bold ;
And she is mine—for ever, ever mine !—
My heart is a proud palace—she its queen ;
My soul a shrine—and she is its dear saint.

MEMORIALS OF THE CRIMEAN WAR.

THE WANT OF THE TIME.

(WINTER OF 1855.)

The hour awaits the man, who shall o'ermaster
Our evil stars ; aud turn this huge disaster
Of war to Victory. Our lords have played
With arts unholy in the dark, and made
A circle of curses round our country's altar ;
And now, poor wizards, they start back afraid
Of the demon they have raised. *They* shrink and palter—
But the strong Nation does not faint nor falter :
Its pulse leaps up to the high heroic mood ;
And million bosoms share the hardihood
Of those who met the battle's desperate odds,
And strode to triumph like flush'd demi-gods.—
Come forth, O Captain-Chief ! We wait for thee
To mount the swell of our great English heart,
And take this grand occasion by the beard !
Come forth, and carve our path to victory !
Repair our waste : and this dear land shall be
A pedestal, whereon thy fame, upreared,
Shall rest among the Names that stand apart,
Like marble gods fronting Eternity !

THE DAY ON WHICH WE HEARD THE NEWS
OF THE FALL OF SEBASTOPOL.

Tis grand to live on so proud a day,
 When a mighty Nation's doubt and pain
 Melt into air, and growing gay,
 It feels like its old self again !
 And the tumult of triumph rolls and swells
 From the roar of guns to the anthem of bells.
 And the People's great heart greatly rejoices,
 And throbs like the cannon, that suddenly booms ;
 And ring to the heavens their million voices
 In chorus of boundless jubilée,
 Mid peal of trumpets and beat of drums,
 Shouting Victory !

Victory ! Victory ! great is the joy.
 From mire of death and misery,
 The rose of conquest flames to the sky
 And blooms blood-red o'er land and sea.
 Behold, we've burst thro' the triple bar ;
 We've crossed the blazing threshold of war ;
 And hence from triumph to triumph we tread,
 With the hopes of the world around us spread !
 Long have we waited to hail this day ;

But now that our conquering march begins,
We can half forget the weary delay,
We can half forgive our rulers' sins.

Glory to our British host !
Glory to heroic France !
Long be they our blended boast,
Peers in peerless puissance !
But, O ye brave, this deed ye've done
Is but earnest of battles yet to be won ;
Up again with a whirlwind sweep,
And on fresh fields new laurels reap !
Wherever glooms the tyrant Czar,
Be first to strike, and last to cease—
Since Freedom must float on the tide of war,
And your swords must carve the path to Peace.

PEACE, AND "THE PEACE."

(1856.)

Blessed is Peace, that turns red battle-fields
To fruitful vineyards, and reposes mild,
'Mid stores of teeming corn and wine and oil,
'Neath shining skies, shaded with wings of doves.

Blessed is Peace, when o'er the bleeding world
She poureth healing dews, " sounds and sweet airs
That give delight and hurt not," and men wake
As from the oppression of a hideous dream
To feel the beauty of the fresh free morn.

Blessed is Peace, when all the dints of strife
Are hid with olive-boughs and wreaths of flowers ;
And all the people rise with jubilant shouts,
With pipe and dance ; and songs of gladness swell
O'er land and sea, and distant shores shake hands.

Yes, blessed is sweet Peace ; but not this peace :
Not this poor semblance—not this sudden lull
Muffling the coming tempest ;—this brief calm
Before the earthquake and the blast of doom.

Our hopes ran high, our hearts beat like a march
Of swelling triumph, when our hosts went forth ;
And Trade grew chivalrous ; and thro' the length
Of this shop-keeping England rose the shout
Of a great people stirred with noble rage.
Oh then did we rejoice, and lift the cry—
England and France for Europe and the right !
Then did we dream that Victory on our helms

Should ride and bear young Freedom ; and we said—
“ Lo, now the old Land with a lion-heart
Shakes off her shames, and rouses for the fight !
Take hope, pale nations, your deliverance comes !
Heroic Poland, Hungary, Italy,
Take hope, ye brave, our sottish peace is o'er !
War with fell War ! Our crime of peace is o'er.
We English are a people slow to move,
But terrible when roused. Thus did we speak,
Full of high hope that battle's storm would end
With humbled despots, and the overturn
Of some vile thrones. 'Tis past, and nothing won
Save restoration of inglorious peace.

Peace, where the sword's clash yields unto the knife
That stabs and makes no noise ; peace, where the roar
Of cannon breaks not thro' the charnel-gloom
Where States in silence rot ; peace, that makes glad
The tyrant's heart, and swells the jubilee
Of fiend-like things exulting o'er the grave
Of murdered Liberty. Oh but there comes
A day for strife in earnest, which will cut
This coil of guilt and shame, and pluck the fangs
From war itself, and with sharp shocks of fate,
Shaking the world, bring peace which is no cheat !

TO M. KOSSUTH.

(1856.)

AMONG the great in glory and in grief,
High place is thine, O Governor and Chief.
I look on thee, and something I would speak
Of my strong feeling—but my words are weak.
And since thou camest victorious from defeat,
When with one pulse our British heart did beat ;
And Hope came with thee, beaming as the morn ;
And 'mid a whirl of welcome thou wert borne
Thro' England's cities, in far prouder state
Than e'er was known by prince or potentate,
Or conqueror, laden with an empire's spoil—
Since then, beholding thy unheeded toil,
Methinks 'twere easier to fight for thee
Than speak more praise and talk more sympathy.
Oh, if great deeds could come of lofty words,
If generous sympathies would serve for swords,
And burning thoughts could spring up armèd men,
How soon thy battle-day would come again,
With sure success and brightness without spot !

And shall it not soon come—Oh, shall it not ?
Yes ! By to-day's assurance of to-morrow ;
By the nobility of thy great sorrow ;
By Freedom's faith and quenchless aspiration ;
By the grand soul of thy unconquered Nation ;
By all the Brave that died on battle-plains,
Or linger still in exile or in chains,
Looking to thee, thou star amid their gloom :
Thy truth shall yet prevail, thy day shall come !
And tho' poor Statesmen temporise with power,
And give eternity to gain an hour ;
Tho' fierce exulting despots, blazing forth
'Mid clouds of curses, smite the suffering earth,
And lift their red hands 'gainst the patient heaven ;
Tho' sweet, sad Liberty, bruised, hunted, driven,
Hiding in secret like a guilty thing,
Withers and pines with homeless wandering :
Yet still be comforted, thou noble heart :
Thy day *must* come ! Thy triumph is a part
Of the grand Future's unrecorded story.—
Oh, like true brothers may we aid thy glory !
May the proud watchword in a coming fight
Be—England's might for Hungary's fair right !

THE TRUE MAN'S DEPARTURE.

THE quiet moonlight on the sleeping town
Lies like the peace of God ; and street and mart,
Late loud with strife, are hushed and holy now.
All jars and fumes and frets of yesterday
Are lost and ended in this depth of night—
Gone like a feeble smoke against the stars,
And faded in the infinite serene.
It is a blessed calm ! And yet, and yet,
These dreaming houses in the languid light,
These streets so sacred in their solitude,
The morn will disenchant ; and here will rise
Grim piles of sordidness and living gloom
With the huge clash, the tramp of hurrying thousands,
And woes of toil, and wiles of chaffering trade.
So Day comes after Night with noise and rage,
And desecrates her sanctitude. Yet soon
Day's noises pass, and sweet Night comes again !
The bubble moods and thoughts and deeds of Day
Change with the changing ages ; but the Night,
The Night, is ever, evermore the same,
With all her dews of rest and holy calms.

I love the Night ! I bless this Night divine ;
For now the slave is free ; and Labour's sons
Forget their toils and sorrows. There they lie
In huddled homes, now turned to palaces
Of slumber, purple-draperied with dreams.
Their little frets are soothed, their tears are dried,
And they rest quiet, folded with the love
And infinite silence of the yearning Night.

But 'mid those sleepers there is one who wakes
At this dead hour to wrestle with grim Death.—
Within a desolate room the moonlight falls
On the worn features of a dying sire,
And on his son's mute sorrow. Pale, comprest,
The youth droops, mournful, bowing low his head
As in an awful presence. Silently
The old man lies : he yields, yet falters not ;
But fronts his conqueror with unquailing gaze.
Life's heat and burden hath he bravely borne
Unto this hour ; and now he waits to die
With a clear courage, like some hero old,
Who bore all shocks and battled till the end,
Then with his armour on, met shunless Fate,
And triumph'd in defeat. He too is one
Of the grand race that were not wont to die

In peaceful beds, but on red battle-fields
In front of freedom's fight, or at the stake,
Or on the scaffold—witnesses for truth,
Reaching to immortality from heights
Of glorious martyrdom ! From year to year,
He held his course right onward, and still on,
Struggling thro' days of toil and nights of thought,
Thro' sufferings keen and errors manifold
To reach a noble manhood : tempering thus
His soul in life's white heat, till like a sword
It leaped i' the sun with flashing eagerness ;
And forth he went for liberty contending,
For truth's great glory, and the people's hope.—
'Gainst giant Wrong, grim-featured Tyranny,
And all their iron hosts, he boldly fought
A lingering friendless fight ; and for his meed,
Storm-shadows, whirling with keen flying darts
Of wrath and scorn, closed round him. Yet still on,
Tho' wounded oft, and smit with many pangs,
He held his way undaunted. Evil looks
Gloomed on him stern, and evil tongues assailed ;
The proud man poured contempt, the tyrant raged ;
But in the height of his clear soul serene
He kept his station, steadfast as a star,
Above the reach of all. And now 'tis past—
His toils are ended, and his day is done.

Half raised upon his bed, the old man bides,
Looking before him with most constant gaze.
There, on the threshold of the dim unknown,
His thoughts are deep, yet they are calm as deep,
Calm as the deepest deeps ; and he reposes
Upon their fulness, gently as a swan
Upon the swell of tide. Clear faith in God,
And the high destinies, sustains him still.
Conscience looks back with tender-shaded face,
Half mournful, half in joy ; while Memory brings
The sweets of vanished years, and soothes his pain,
Like a kind minist'ring spirit.—

In this hour,
Oh how that humble dying one doth rise
Above the gilded things that scorned him once !
When the proud tyrant yields to mocking Death,
How poor a slave is he—how utter weak !
'Neath canopies of purple, stiff with gold,
Restless, he rolls and moans—a writhing worm,
Trampled by huge Remorse ! Fiend Memory
Heaps all the past like fire upon his head ;
And Fury Conscience with a scourge of snakes
Drives him to outer blackness.—

Possessed in gentle patience, the old man
There lingering, breathed no murmur. In his eyes

A mild intelligence dispelled the mist
Of bodily weakness. Radiance spiritual
Broke like a sunburst thro' the gathering glooms,
And all life's light in this death-hour returned.
As if the soul, leaving her earthly home,
Gathered her retinue of glorious thoughts,
And robed herself to enter Heaven in state;
Yet with a pathos, grand in lowness,
Subdued and softened like a setting sun.
Long he reposed in stillness, how profound!
It was a deep, deep hush, a silence broken
By the mind's workings only, and the weight
Of meditation pressing palpable
Against the listening sense.—At length, his thoughts,
Solemn, serene, broke slowly into speech:—

I go, he said, to my appointed home,
Out of the sunlight and the healthsome air,
Out of the night, and where no star can reach.
My long, long home; dark, and for ever closed;
A narrow house, whose door would open not
Tho' all men knocked, tho' worlds were perishing,
And I might bring deliverance. Yet with Death
I argue not; since I have but to meet
What none may 'scape, and do but go the way
Which all the numberless dead have gone before,

And all the living follow. The proud World
Comes after me, with all its pomp and noise :
The great ones of the earth, mocking the heavens,
And motley multitudes unknown, unnamed,
Hither they haste to join me, and from hence
Each treads alone his dim and doubtful way.
Whither I go 'tis there I shall lie down
In equal state with all the mighty ones—
Yea, I shall rest in peace, where no man knows,
Surrounded with the vanished centuries,
With empires old and royalties outworn,
And all the nations of the populous grave !
I murmur not ; but will lie down content
To wait what may betide.

The old man paused, and earnest spoke the youth :
Father, thou teachest me to tame my grief,
And yield to this inexorable hour.
Oh, father, in the neighbourhood of death,
Perchance thou seest where all to me is dark.
Oh, canst thou even now look o'er the verge
Whereon thou standest ? Dost thou aught discern
Of the near future from this brink of time—
A gleam of promise, streak of dawning light,
A splendour growing out of this death-gloom ?

My way is hid—he answered—yet clear faith
Exceedeth knowledge ; yea, it doth suffice
For all that is unknown ; and I depart
In full assurance that this darksome path
But narrows to a broad approach of glory
And blessedness supreme. Oh, could I shape
My strange thoughts into speech, could I unfold
That which is most within me, mine would seem :
A voice not of this world. Ah ! my faint breath
Is but as mist that hides what I would speak.
A mighty thought arises, dim and vast,
Higher and higher still I feel it rise
Within me—higher till it seems to fade
In God's light absolute. Then this flesh-film
Comes like a cloud between me and the heavens.
Let it suffice for thee that even here,
Outside the curtained mystery, I discern
Forms undefined and faint foreshadowings
Of all which yet is hid. The darkness blooms
With thousand uninterpretable signs,
Which mingle in a sense of coming joy,
Most deep, most full.

Draw nearer, O my son,
So I may lay mine hands upon thy head
And bless thee ere I die. Oh, I would speak

With tongue of flame, and utter my last breath
Full as God's bounty on an orphan world
To tell how tenderly o'er thee I yearn.
But words are weak, and a cold hand restrains.
Vainly I strive to speak the mighty love
That swells against this hour, as a dumb sea,
Breaks on a dead shore, heaving with dim moans,
And cannot tell its secret. Yet draw near,
And mark me while thou may'st.

My day is done.

I leave my heart with thee : thou liv'st for me.—
I bid thee take my yoke, renew my toils,
With thy own best addition, to achieve
The weal of all thy brethren. Round us now,
Upon Night's pitying breast, they sleep in peace—
Would they might wake in joy ! Oh be it thine
To gladden and exalt their sad poor life !
Be their true brother, on thy forehead bearing
The morning of their hope. Oh do thou seek
To win this world for them ; but seek still more
To win back Heaven, now faded from their sight.
Nourish thy soul in reverence and truth.
Be thou God's workman, zealous to build up
In poor men's hearts a temple unto Him,

The shadow of whose dread eternity
Now hides this world of time.

Thus far, with frequent pause, the old man spake,
And now he ceased ; whereat the youth, much moved,
With faltering accent gave assurance firm
Of pious duty. By that bed of death,
Like one ordained to noble life, he knelt.
Swift change came o'er the dying : stains of years,
And scars of pain from his worn visage swept,
And left it strangely young. As in a swoon
Of ecstacy he lay ; and while so rapt,
It seemed the shifting lights of long-ago
Were blent with radiance of unrisen suns.
Sweet memories o'er him streamed of faces kind
That crossed his path like sunbeams ; gentle voices
That blessed him once ; and days that shone apart,
The stars of years ; and scenes of early joys.
But chief and over all, the thought of her,
His buried love, dilated till it grew
To visible form of grace—the same, so fair,
That died out of his arms.
She came in saintly beauty, and he lay
Surrendered to her charm, soothed like a babe,
Without a wish or thought than so to lie

For ever tranced and moveless ; till o'erwrought
By his exceeding bliss, with sweet constraint
He 'gan revive, and murmured faint and low :

Soft, soft, O blessed hour, O thou white vision
Of my Beloved, my bosom's Own, dost come
To lead me to thy rest ? Thou speakest not
But o'er me bendest with those yearning eyes
That first did bless my life ! And thou dost float
O'er me, and round me, with soft-soothing grace,
And thou dost smile a slow sweet smile, so sweet
That Death relents, and smoothes his frowning looks,
And e'en grows kind. Yes, yes, thy presence now
Assures me of my great exceeding joy—
I feel all will be well !

Fainter, and fainter, grew his feeble breath,
And utterance failed. But more fair visions bloomed
On his rapt gaze, till death and life seemed merged
In one great blessedness. The heavens now broke
In sudden glory, thronged with spirits bright,—
Fair shining forms that round him circled far,
And high above, till they were lost in haze
Of splendour undefined. The great and good
Of human kind they were, his co-mates blest,

Come from their happy home to welcome him,
Their humbler brother. Sages, heroes, bards,
Loves he had cherished, names he had revered,
Bright names of those who worked well for the world,
In radiant shapes, with more than kingly crowns
About their brows, appeared. Range above range,
Calm in their immortalities they rose,
And beamed august, yet kind, as with the blaze
Of myriad grandeurs in one light of love,
And in that light he passed.

THE PENITENT MAGDALEN.

[SUGGESTED BY A PIECE OF SCULPTURE.]

(1852).

WHAT eloquence of remorse is in that meek
And mute expression ! Wanderer forlorn,
Poor Outcast, thou'rt indeed smit by the scorn
Of the hard world : But thine own heart doth speak
The heavier sentence ; thine own feelings wreak
The keener smart. Dost think of the young morn
When life was innocence and hope unworn,
And maiden roses blossomied in thy cheek ?
The promise of that time thou may'st redeem ;
The gulph 'twixt then and now doth not immure
Thy future years, nor hide the heavens supreme :
Take comfort, stricken one ; hope and endure:
The sinful past is but a loathsome dream ;
Thy spirit's agony hath left thee pure.

A WORKER TO A WORKER.

(1852.)

Why wilt thou sink, with little cares outworn,
And die away before thou art full born ?—
Lo, what fair stars and influences benign
Bend over thee ! What heritage is thine
Of power and glory present and to be !
What worlds on worlds await thy sovereignty !
What crowning triumphs and what trophies gay
Are thine to achieve ; and what a long array
Of willing servitors thy steps attend,
And own thee lord, and at thy bidding bend !
Look up, look up, the heavens are overhead—
Look up, and mark the bonnties for thee spread.
Dear Poesy, beguiling thy hard tasks,
Hides frowning fortunes with well-favoured masks,
Where'er she smiles, dim wastes and barren sands
Bloom azure isles, and happy faery lands,
Where naiads revel in the lucent floods ;
And fauns and dryads sport among the woods ;
And mystic shapes and voices haunt the deeps

Of air and sea ; and Freedom's spirit leaps
From height to height exulting ; and great Love
Clasps all things round, and under, and above.
Sweet Music, yearning over thee, o'erswells
The bounded present ; and, enrapt, fortells
Great future glories ; while re-wake the strains
Of years far gone—songs piped on pastoral plains
At morn and eve ; and clarion-peals that fired
Brave hearts with martial daring, and inspired
Heroic scorn of death ; and melting tones
Of lute, soft languishing delicious moans
Of love-sick maiden in the twilight dim :
These, and the everlasting choral hymn
Of woods and winds, and the mysterious hum,
Upgathered, of all human voices, come
Thro' the sounding caves and down the gentle vales
Of mellowing time, and fill the evening gales
With meanings strange and throbbing eestacies.
Ministrant spirits, guardian influences,
Embosom thee ; and wondrous charms and spells
Circle thy steps ; and soothiest oracles
Unfold new lore of life in speech replete
With olden wisdom : Ever dost thou meet
Heralds of coming good : Even in bare nooks
And dreariest depths, bright visions, kindly looks,

Or tones of song, or glimpses of the sky,
Or forms of gentle grace in passing by,
Bring gracious messages from sovereign powers,
And gild the dark, and cheer the drooping hours.

Thou wert not born to be thy spirit's tomb ;
Thou art not banished to perdition's gloom ;
A glorious Presence waits before thee now :
The thoughts of Time repose upon her brow ;
In her sole form are blended all the graces
Of fairest things ; the smiles of all sweet faces
Beam in her aspect ; Music's thousand tongues
She speaks withal ; the charmèd air prolongs
From earliest time the lovely words she saith ;
In her soft breathings is the mingled breath
Of all earth's summers ; and the throbs intense
Of all true hearts compose the mighty sense
Wherewith her bosom heaves ; and she surrenders
All, all to thee ; and clothes thee with her splendours,
Yea, blends thee with her being ! She is thine
And thou art hers—the life and end of her design.



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